

MAY 4, 2009

The American Conservative



High Church Conservatism

Daniel McCarthy

Mailer for Mayor

John Buffalo Mailer

Ayn Rand's Muse

Stephen Cox

HOW RIGHT WAS REAGAN?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FREE Gold & Silver Protection Guide

Recession-Proof Your Money

LEARN HOW TO PROTECT YOUR WEALTH AND
PROSPER FROM THE DOLLAR'S DEMISE.
TURN YOUR FIAT CURRENCY INTO
Real Money.



ARE YOU PREPARED for the coming hard times?

Why GOLDWORTH FINANCIAL believes NOW is the time to own Gold & Silver:

Our country and financial markets are headed into the perfect storm: Crashing credit and real estate markets, a plummeting U.S. dollar, high energy prices, inflation, the underwater banking system and irresponsible government spending are combining to bring on a crisis of unprecedented proportions.

If you have ever thought about wealth protection, please call 1-800-955-5732 today to request your FREE *Gold & Silver Protection Guide*.

GOLDWORTH FINANCIAL's FREE *Gold & Silver Protection Guide* is worth its weight in gold!

It explains in easy-to-understand language:

- The Pros & Cons of Bars and Coins
- Government Metals vs. Private Metals
- How to get the best value for your money
- The affect the North American Union & the Amero will have on Gold & Silver . . .



- How to include tangible metals in your IRA, 401K, 403(b) as well as other retirement plans

Help protect your future by owning the only asset that has a proven track record of preserving and protecting wealth during recessionary economic cycles.

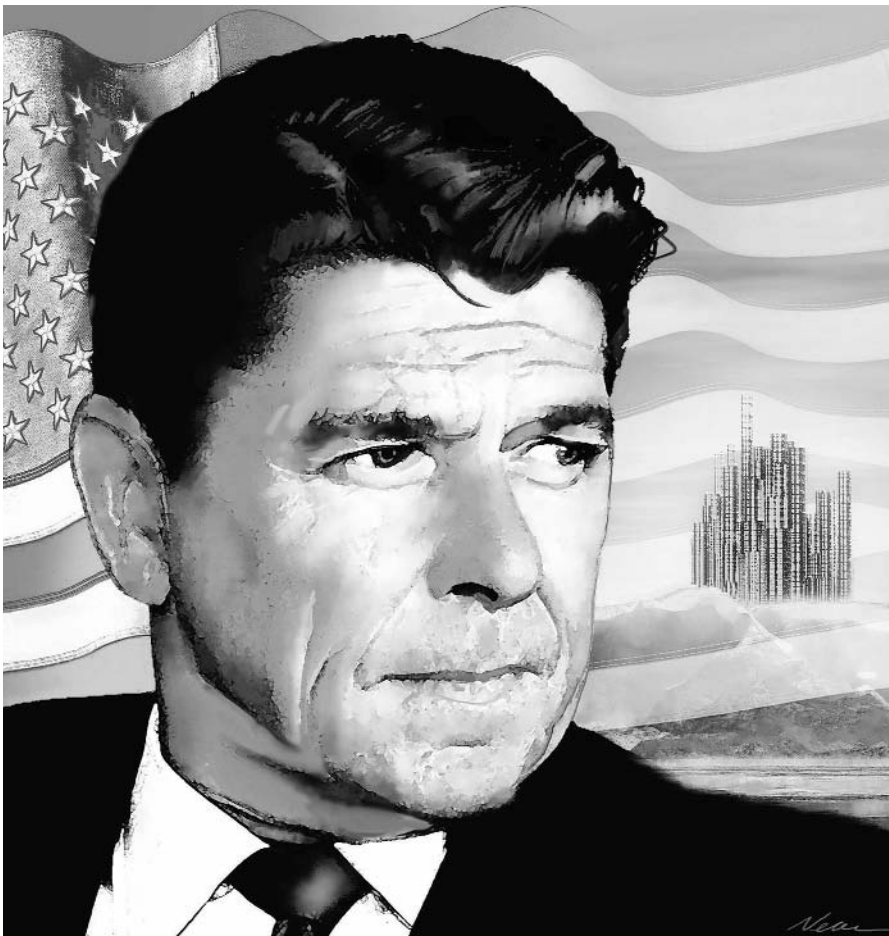
Tangible Gold & Silver have been the safest way to protect wealth AND profit from the depreciating U.S. dollar.

Don't put off your financial security!

Call today and order your FREE
Gold & Silver Protection Guide

1-800-955-5732

www.GOLDWORTH.com



KRT ILLUSTRATIONS

[COVER]

How Right Was Reagan?

BY RICHARD GAMBLE At a time when they should be returning to first principles, conservatives look instead to their favorite matinee idol.

Page 6

[CULTURE]

What Would Burke Do?

BY DANIEL MCCARTHY Reviving the Constitution depends on restoring the tie between church and state. Page 10

[POLITICS]

Summer of '69

BY JOHN BUFFALO MAILER My father's campaign to liberate New York from New York Page 14

[BUSINESS]

By the Book

BY JEREMY BEER Reports of the death of publishing are greatly exaggerated.

Page 19

COLUMNS

13 **Stuart Reid:** Betting on Brown

35 **Fred Reed:** Whistling Dixie

NEWS & VIEWS

4 **Fourteen Days:** Reading the Tea Party Leaves; Cutting Millions, Spending Trillions; Kerry Bails Out His Base—the Media

16 **Deep Background:** Denny Hastert Talks Turkey

ARTICLES

17 **Nicholas von Hoffman:** Left and Right think it's 1930 again, but America isn't that country anymore.

21 **Paul Gottfried:** Eric Foner reconstructs history to fit the PC agenda.

24 **Thomas E. Woods Jr.:** Warren Harding knew that government stimulus only prolongs depression.

26 **Stephen Cox:** As Ayn Rand's sales soar, remember Isabel Paterson, the woman who inspired her.

ARTS & LETTERS

28 **Steve Sailer:** Russell Crowe in "State of Play"

29 **Septimus Waugh:** *1848: Year of Revolution* by Mike Rapport

31 **Mary Wakefield:** *Descent Into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* by Ahmed Rashid

32 **Donald Livingston:** *The Philosophers' Quarrel: Rousseau, Hume, and the Limits of Human Understanding* by Robert Zaretsky and John T. Scott

[PROTEST]

TEMPEST IN A TEACUP

We come second to no one in our disgust with the Obama administration's economic policies. But we reserve a measure of disdain for those who answered his predecessor's profligacy with perfect silence—indeed, who lined up behind the candidate proud to suspend his campaign and rush back to Washington to lead the bailout charge. Their recent discovery of fiscal conservatism is preferable to no recognition of federal limits, but they are late to the tea party.

Sure, there's visceral satisfaction in mass symbolism, but this is only that—a pretty bit of theater designed to make the participants feel righteous. The cable jockeys congratulate the herd, who reward them with a ratings boost. But public policy carries on, unfazed by a handful of recent converts thrilled to have committed lunch-hour treason.

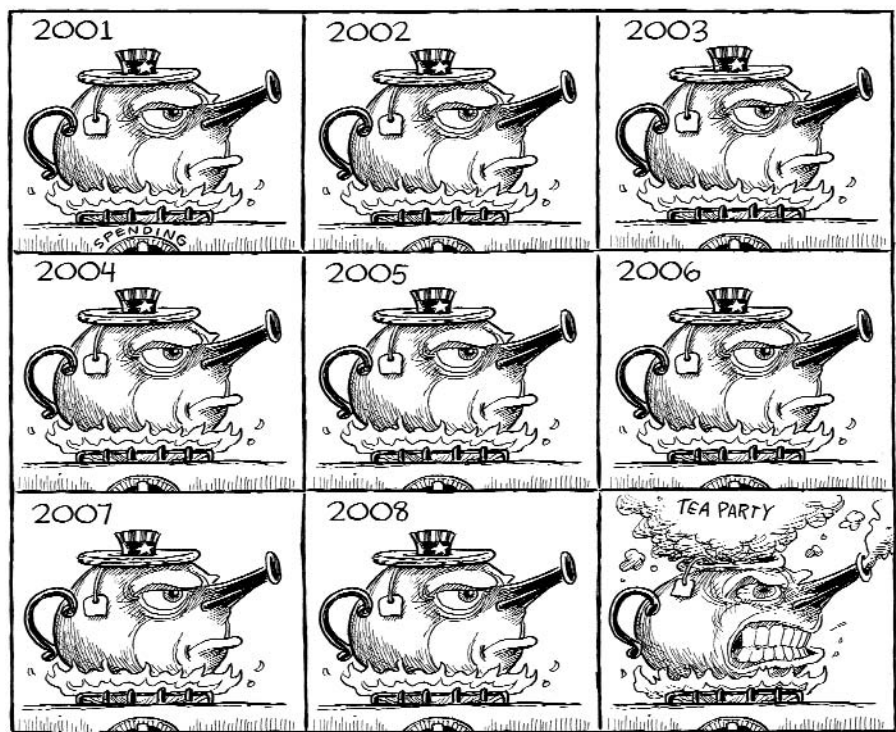
Were they principled opponents of massive spending, they would have found their voices ages ago, back when Bush was pouring billions into the sands of Mesopotamia and passing entitlements that would have made LBJ blush. Now they're merely humdrum partisans opposing a liberal president. Far from affecting change, their populist noise obscures the actual problem: given access to the Treasury, either side will spend recklessly. It also drains public emotion without channeling it into meaningful political action.

Where were these rebels back when Ron Paul was serving tea? Politely sipping the weak Republican brew, of course. That's what party people do.

[BUDGET]

A DIME'S NO DIFFERENCE

President Obama has ordered his Cabinet to trim \$100 million from departmental budgets. "Families are making hard choices," he intoned gravely, "it's time their government did the same."



Prudential words, indeed. And \$100 million might sound like a lot. But in these days of \$3.6 trillion bailouts and stimulus extravaganza, it's not worth a jot—0.007 percent of Obama's planned deficit spending in 2010.

The *New York Times* reported that "budget analysts burst out laughing" when they heard Obama's measly proposal. Brian Riedl of the Heritage Foundation pointed out that the cuts were tantamount to asking a family spending \$40,000 a year to save \$1. Cato's Dan Mitchell called it "spit in the face of hardworking American taxpayers."

Team Obama switched to defense. "This is a symbol of a new attitude and a new perspective," insisted the frugalist Rahm Emanuel. "\$100 million there, \$100 million here," said the president. "Pretty soon, even in Washington, it adds up to real money." Pretty soon, his administration should remember what "real money" means.

[JUSTICE]

TORTURED DEFINITION

Jonah Goldberg admits at *National Review Online*, "I've always been on the fence about whether waterboarding constituted torture." That should be simple enough to resolve: Waterboarding simulates drowning for the purpose of extracting information. Drowning hurts. Administering extreme hurt for the pur-

pose of extracting information seems like a reasonable definition of torture.

But by Goldberg Rules, it's not about the morality of the act itself but the frequency with which it occurs. (Coveting your neighbor's wife may be excusable if you only do it on Wednesdays.) He decides that waterboarding someone 183 times in a month does in fact cross the torture threshold, though he goes on to indulge a correspondent who comes to the opposite conclusion: "If something was happening to me 6 times every day for a month, it is quite safe to say it isn't very torturous. If it was torture and as bad as the liberals say it is, nobody could tolerate 6 times every day for a month."

According to a recently released 2005 Justice Department memo, the CIA waterboarded Khalid Shaikh Mohammed 183 times in March 2003. Another prisoner got off comparatively easy—he was nearly drowned just 83 times in August 2002. The *New York Times* reports that visitors from Langley watched the proceedings, and though the CIA station chief in Thailand felt that the victim had no more information, the torturers did not relent.

Eager to put this "painful chapter behind us," President Obama pronounced that "nothing will be gained by spending our time and energy laying blame for the past." That doesn't remove the stain.

The *Times* reveals other officially sanctioned methods: “keeping detainees awake for up to 11 straight days, placing them in a dark, cramped box or putting insects into the box to exploit their fears ... forced nudity, the slamming of detainees into walls ... and the dousing of detainees with water as cold as 41 degrees.”

Not exactly a study in the rule of law there, but as every good *National Review* reader knows, sleep-deprivation doesn't become torturous before 12 days and water isn't persuasively frigid until it hits 40 degrees.

[RIP]

FREEDOM FIGHTER

Burt Blumert, who died March 30 at age 80, was a founder of the libertarian movement, a great fighter for freedom, and a leading anti-imperialist. His close friendship and financial support helped Murray Rothbard get his ideas into the American mainstream.

In 1972, Burt helped launch the Libertarian Party and the Center for Libertarian Studies. Ten years later, he co-founded the Ludwig von Mises Institute. He was the finance chairman for Ron Paul's Libertarian Party presidential campaign in 1988.

I first met him in 1990, when he served on the advisory board of the Committee to Avert a Mideast Holocaust, a group I co-founded to oppose America's first war with Iraq—we warned where the war would lead. That same year, Burt helped launch the *Rothbard Rockwell Report*, one of the few voices speaking out against America's growing imperialist policies in the Middle East.

For years, Burt was a tireless benefactor of the always underfunded freedom movement. He helped start the great anti-imperial website Antiwar.com, which has become, in the words of Ron Paul, “the leading source of information for scholars, journalists, and activists looking for

material to combat the propaganda of the War Party.” Burt was also a leader of American Jews opposed to the extremes of Zionism, pressing for even-handed policies in the Mideast and opposed to the settlements on the West Bank.

Eloquent eulogies from Ron Paul, Gary North, Lew Rockwell, Justin Raimondo, and others are linked at LewRockwell.com/Blumert. May this great and brave man rest in peace and forever be thanked by freedom-loving Americans.

—Jon Basil Utley

[MEDIA]

CASH & KERRY

Across America, depressed hacks look on nervously as their trade collapses. Each day, it seems, a newspaper giant stops its presses or a great magazine fizzles out. Old media faces death by a trillion online clicks; all hail the adolescent blog-nerds armed with Wikipedia.

This cannot be, say the self-appointed guardians of free speech. Without an established press, decry the editorialists, what becomes of the First Amendment (and our salaries)?

Step forward, Sen. John Kerry, patron pol of hopeless causes and chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet. The failed presidential candidate, who famously blamed his 2004 defeat on the “corporatization of the media,” will lead a political bid to rescue the Fourth Estate. Speaking hours before the *New York Times* announced disastrously low first-quarter advertising revenues, the Massachusetts senator told journos that they are “vital to our democracy.” He vowed, “We must do all we can to ensure a diverse and independent news media.”

Forgive us, senator, for not raising our hopes. Good journalism cannot be secured through government intervention. The committee's first hearing is scheduled for next month. We hope that TAC lives long enough to see it fail. ■

The American Conservative

Publisher
Ron Unz

Editor at Large
Scott McConnell

Executive Editor
Kara Hopkins

Senior Editor
Daniel McCarthy

Literary Editor
Freddy Gray

Film Critic
Steve Sailer

Contributing Editors

W. James Antle III, Andrew J. Bacevich, Doug Bandow, Jeremy Beer, James Bovard, Michael Desch, Philip Giraldi, Paul Gottfried, Leon Hadar, Peter Hitchens, Daniel Larison, Christopher Layne, Eric S. Margolis, James P. Pinkerton, Justin Raimondo, Fred Reed, Stuart Reid, R.J. Stove, Kelley B. Vlahos, Thomas E. Woods Jr.

Art Director
Mark Graef

Associate Publisher
Jon Basil Utley

Publishing Consultant
Ronald E. Burr

Founding Editors
Patrick J. Buchanan, Taki Theodoracopulos

The American Conservative, Vol. 8, No. 9, May 4, 2009 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 24 times per year, biweekly (except for January and August) for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (24 issues) in the U.S., \$54.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$89.97 other foreign, via airmail. Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries —

By phone: **800-579-6148**
(outside the U.S./Canada 856-380-4131)

Via Web: www.amconmag.com

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

Inquiries and letters to the editor should be sent to letters@amconmag.com. For advertising sales call Ronald Burr at 703-893-3632. For editorial, call 703-875-7600.

This issue went to press on April 23, 2009.
Copyright 2009 *The American Conservative*.

[sunny side up]

How Right Was Reagan?

The 40th president gave America hope—but that's not enough.

By Richard Gamble

A FEW WEEKS AGO, my mailman delivered an invitation to my 30th high school reunion. I'm not sure the shock made me feel any older, but the landmark has led me to think about what was going on in America and the world in the summer of 1979.

It's hard to be nostalgic. Jimmy Carter was president. Inflation was high. The energy crisis had become a part of daily life. By the end of the year, Iranian revolutionaries had taken 52 Americans hostage and the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan. On July 15, a few weeks after my graduation, President Carter delivered a nationally televised speech in which he spoke of "a fundamental threat to American democracy." That threat took the form not of international Communism or the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Rather, he sensed a debilitating "crisis of confidence" about the nation's future, a spiritual emptiness brought about by a culture of "self-indulgence and consumption" and an erosion of faith in our institutions. Quickly dubbed the "malaise speech," his sermon may well have cost him re-election in 1980. Sackcloth and ashes just weren't America's style. Sunny Ronald Reagan, Hollywood actor turned California governor, racked up a stunning 489 electoral votes to Carter's dismal 49.

Three decades have passed since Reagan's campaign for the White House. This past January marked the 20th

anniversary of his farewell from the Oval Office. And this June will be the fifth anniversary of his death at the age of 93 after a long struggle with Alzheimer's. This cluster of anniversaries provides occasion to reflect on Reagan's legacy.

Pundits and scholars from Left and Right haven't hesitated to jump into the debate. For some, the 40th president did no right; for others, he did no wrong. Liberal critics like to remind us of Iran-Contra, the Savings and Loan scandal, the "Decade of Greed," and the gun-slinging jingoism that allegedly brought us to the brink of war with the Soviets. Conservatives would rather reminisce about tax cuts, supply-side economics, low inflation, and the end of the Evil Empire.

Surely somewhere between efforts to deconstruct the Reagan "myth" and campaigns to add his likeness to Mt. Rushmore there lies room for thoughtful reconsideration of Reagan's leadership and his stature in American conservatism.

Understandably, many Republicans, still reeling from their embarrassing electoral defeats in 2008, would rather protect their most valuable asset. Calling Reagan's conservatism into question at this moment seems in poor taste, willfully perverse, or even treasonous. What good can possibly come of scrutinizing one of the Republican Party's few remaining inspirations and sources of unity? The old Cold War coalition has little else going for

it. For those whose highest goal is Republican victories in 2010 and 2012, the Reagan we think we know is just too valuable to direct-mail fundraising to risk tampering with. But conservatives whose imaginations encompass more than politics ought to be willing to submit their movement to any diagnostic tests necessary. If American conservatism is fundamentally healthy and just a little down on its luck, then we need only to figure out how to recapture the magic. But if it is unhealthy, then we need more than another round of "morning in America."

When Reagan assumed office in 1981, anything seemed possible, especially to young conservatives who, like me, were just becoming politically aware, eager to read the right books, think the right thoughts, and join the right organizations. Reagan's Inaugural Address brought an abrupt end to Carter's "crisis of confidence." In a moment, optimism muscled aside malaise. The new president told America that government was the problem, not the solution. The whole edifice of the New Deal and the Great Society seemed to quiver. Surely the secretaries of education and energy would soon be standing on the unemployment line. And the immediate release of the Iranian hostages, held for 444 days, proved that the world was watching and once again respected American military might and resolve. In short, liberalism's stranglehold on domestic and foreign

policy was over. Conservatism's 30-year effort to take back America had triumphed.

Or so it seemed. Russell Kirk wrote in the foreword to the 1986 edition of *The Conservative Mind*, "by 1980, both American liberalism and British socialism lay in the sere and yellow leaf." His claim sounded true back then. Reagan and Margaret Thatcher appeared to have won the battle of ideas. The conservative movement looked like it had indeed "supplant[ed] in power America's latter-day liberalism."

Which conservative in the mid-1980s could have imagined the Age of Obama? Who could have predicted that statist liberalism would come roaring back to life with such persuasive power? Kirk, a friend of Reagan's and an honored guest at the White House, wrote glowingly in his memoirs of Reagan's achievement: "To the American people, Ronald Reagan had become the Western hero of romance—audacious, faithful, cheerful, honest, and skilled at shooting from the hip." He had reformed education, had reduced taxes, inflation, and unemployment, and had stood up to Libya and the Soviet Union, Kirk recalled.

Such an endorsement from one of the greatest inspirations of the post-World War II conservative renaissance carries considerable authority with the movement. And rightly so. It should give pause to anyone reckless enough to challenge Reagan's legacy. But that legacy itself raises nagging questions. The federal payroll was larger in 1989 than it had been in 1981. Reagan's tax cuts, whatever their merits as short-term fiscal policy, left large and growing budget deficits when combined with increased spending, and added to the national debt. His tax increases were among the largest proportionate ones in U.S. history. And more than one historian has called Reagan's foreign policy "Wilsonian." In short, it is hard in 2009 to point

to any concrete evidence that the Reagan Revolution fundamentally altered the nation's trajectory toward bloated, centralized, interventionist government. Conservatism in the 1980s made its peace with much of liberalism—if not with all of its legislative agenda, then at least with its means to power. Republicans and Democrats now argue over how big the bailouts should be or how long the troops should remain deployed, rarely about first principles.

This is not to say that if Reagan were alive he would endorse America's current domestic and foreign policy—or even that he would endorse the Republican alternatives. In light of what has happened at home and abroad since he left office, his actions as president seem restrained. In contrast to George W. Bush, he looks like a reluctant warrior and anything but a militarist. Whatever his achievements, and they were many and deserve our respect, it is worth asking whether Reagan's optimistic rhetoric and vision for America helped perpetuate the liberal agenda rather than preserve or recover anything resembling, say, Burkean conservatism or the Founders' philosophy of limited government.

Reagan's speeches abounded with themes that were anything but conservative. He aligned the Republican crusader more closely with America's expansive liberal temperament. In particular, his brand of evangelical Christianity, combined with fragments of Puritanism, enlightenment optimism, and romantic liberalism, set Reagan apart in key ways from historic conservatism.

Reagan grew up in the 1920s in Dixon, Illinois in the pietistic, revivalist world of the Disciples of Christ—a world known to many millions of American evangelicals then and since. Biographer Edmund Morris's *Dutch* (1999) and Paul Kengor's *God and Ronald Reagan* (2004) make much of the "practical Christianity" espoused by Reagan's

mother, the local pastor and congregation, and such religious best-sellers as *That Printer of Udell's*. This activist faith shared important assumptions with the social gospel's "applied Christianity." Both set out to remake the City of Man through the power of the church's moral influence. Reagan's spirituality was shaped by a "Jesus-only" populist Christianity that emphasized the conversion experience and an activist faith suspicious of creeds, rituals, ecclesiastical bodies, and denominational boundaries.

Reagan never turned away from this transformationist Christianity. It became a fundamental part of his civil religion. Historian John Patrick Diggins, in *Ronald Reagan: Fate, Freedom, and the Making of History* (2007), goes as far as to say that the president's theology "seemed to offer a Christianity without Christ and the crucifixion, a religion without reference to sin, evil, suffering, or sacrifice." Diggins's implicit question, "Why couldn't Reagan have been more like Reinhold Niebuhr?" may not be exactly the right one. Why should we expect our presidents to do theology at all, even neo-orthodox theology? But his point is well taken. Reagan's optimistic Christianity seemed ready made for an America disinclined to hear talk of limits to power and wealth. The historic Christian message can sound downright un-American.

To this outward-directed, meliorist evangelicalism, Reagan added the Puritan New Englanders' sense of divine calling. His use of the Puritan tradition was selective at best. Rarely do we glimpse in Reagan the early settlers' sober doctrines of original sin, the weight of personal and national guilt before a holy God, or impending divine judgment. Instead, for at least 30 years, Reagan quoted, with little variation, just a few fragments from Gov. John Winthrop's 1630 discourse, "A Modell of Christian Charity." Speaking before the

first CPAC convention in 1974, then Governor Reagan quoted a line from Winthrop that has since become inseparable from Reagan's identity: "we will be as a city upon a hill." To be sure, he continued the quotation's warning that "the eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword throughout the world." Though he returned to these words often, Reagan never accused America of dealing falsely with God, and so God kept His part of the covenantal bargain. Adding the word "shining" to Winthrop's city, Reagan would appeal to the city on a hill so often that the words became his signature phrase, eclipsing all memory that Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon had also applied Winthrop's words to the United States.

In Reagan's rhetoric, America's identity as the "city on a hill" Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount became a generic affirmation of optimism, material prosperity, and providential destiny. Nothing remained of the hilltop city as a metaphor for the church's teaching ministry, no place, that is, for the normative interpretation of these words from Matthew's gospel among Christians for centuries until they were co-opted by American politicians and their speechwriters.

Reagan gave the fullest explanation of his use of the "shining city on a hill" near the end of his Farewell Address in 1989. Reagan's city had become a metaphor for a secure America with a bustling economy and open borders. "In my mind," he explained, "it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace, a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were

open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it and see it still." One can only wonder what Governor Winthrop would have made of this thoroughly modern transmutation of his meditation on the demands of sacrificial love within the body of Christ.

Paul Kengor defends Reagan's appropriation of biblical language by noting, correctly, that many presidents, including liberal Democrats, have done the same thing. But pointing out the similarities between Reagan and Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and John Kennedy, while it may slow down critics on the Left, is hardly likely to reassure conservatives about Reagan's credentials. America's identity as a chosen nation has indeed found advocates from across the political spectrum, but that fact merely shows how deeply the habit is embedded in America's self-understanding. Whether that understanding is healthy is another matter. There is nothing inherently conservative about believing that America is God's promised land for a new epoch. Because it sounds so patriotic to elevate America among God's elect, however, many conservatives dig in their heels and resist any challenge to America's redeemer myth.

Oddly, Reagan wedded his take on the Puritan sense of mission to the radical Enlightenment's secular redemptive impulse. He quoted the revolutionary ideologue Tom Paine about as often as he quoted Winthrop. Reagan found one line from Paine's *Common Sense* irresistible: "We have it in our power to begin the world over again." Paine looked for some nation to be the new Adam of a new race. He compared the world in the 1770s to the days of Noah. A great deluge would soon liberate humanity from its bondage to the past. No wonder Paine got on Burke's nerves. Drawing out the implications of Reagan's fondness for Paine, Diggins

concludes that the president's political philosophy had more in common with Paine's promise of emancipation from authority than with the anti-utopian realism of the *Federalist Papers*.

Reagan's frequent use of Winthrop and Paine may be chalked up to a conventional sort of patriotism that draws easily from any number of bits and pieces of America's past to fashion a common identity—the sort of thing that has been commonplace in July 4th orations for 200 years. But Diggins has noticed a further dimension of Reagan's temperament and philosophy overlooked by most other historians and biographers. Not only did Reagan routinely cite Winthrop and Paine, he also quoted from the transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson. He used Emerson, Diggins argues, to preach self-reliance, individual autonomy, a preoccupation with the future, and freedom from sin and guilt and the weight of experience. Diggins's best evidence comes from Reagan's 1992 speech before the Republican National Convention: "Emerson was right," Reagan said. "We are the country of tomorrow. Our revolution did not end at Yorktown. More than two centuries later, America remains on a voyage of discovery, a land that has never become, but is always in the act of becoming."

Reagan's attraction to an America in pursuit of an unfinished revolution and "always in the act of becoming" is hard to square with conservative principles. "Far from being a conservative," Diggins writes, "Reagan was the great liberating spirit of modern American history, a political romantic impatient with the status quo." In short, he was "our Emersonian president."

Doubting the depths of Reagan's conservatism sounds akin to doubting FDR's liberalism. We are so accustomed to thinking of Reagan as the pre-eminent conservative statesman of our time that

any shadow on that reputation seems nonsensical. But some conservative dissidents have recently blamed Reagan for giving his benediction to the most culturally corrosive tendencies in the American character. In his recent best-seller, *The Limits of Power* (2008), Andrew Bacevich harshly criticizes Reagan for just this failing. Bacevich notes the irony of Carter's seemingly more conservative plea for limits juxtaposed against Reagan's boundless optimism. "Reagan portrayed himself as conservative," Bacevich writes of the campaign underway in 1979. "He was, in fact, the modern prophet of profligacy, the politician who gave moral sanction to the empire of consumption. Beguiling his fellow citizens with his talk of 'morning in America,' the faux-conservative Reagan added to America's civic religion two crucial beliefs: Credit has no limits, and the bills will never come due." Bacevich charges the "faux-conservative" Reagan with nothing less than undermining America's moral constitution, its adherence to such timeless "folk wisdom" as "save for a rainy day."

Dissent about Reagan among conservative intellectuals goes back surprisingly far, back even to Reagan's first term. Historian John Lukacs, writing in *Outgrowing Democracy* (published in 1984 and later reissued under the title *A New Republic*), found it necessary to put Reagan's "conservatism" in quotation marks, calling it "lamentably short-sighted and shallow." He conceded that much of Reagan's rhetoric was conservative and that it spoke to certain durable conservative instincts in the American people. But overall, Reagan preached yet another version of sinless, progressive America that had more in common with Tom Paine and Woodrow Wilson than with Edmund Burke. In a chapter added in 2004, Lukacs attributed the record budget deficits of the 1980s in part to Reagan's populist mes-

sage that demanded no self-sacrifice or hard choices from the American public. They could have it all. He also credited the collapse of the Soviet Union to the Russian people's own loss of faith in Communism and to the political skills of Mikhail Gorbachev, not to Reagan's military build up.

In a further criticism, Lukacs traced the "militarization of the image of the presidency" to Reagan. It was Reagan, after all, who began the practice of returning the salutes of the military—a precedent followed by every president since. While doing so may seem to honor the military, it in fact erodes the public's understanding of the presidency as a civilian office, Lukacs argued. Indeed, Fox News bears out Lukacs's warning. The cable news giant got into the habit during the Bush II administration of referring to the president as commander in chief no matter what story they were reporting, seemingly unaware that the nation's executive is the commander in chief of the Armed Forces of the United States and not commander in chief of the American people at large. If the president visits a city ravaged by a hurricane, he is emphatically not there in his role as commander in chief. If every American thinks of the president—of whatever political party—as *my* commander in chief and not narrowly as the Army or Navy's commander in chief, then we have taken another decisive step from republic to empire. If every American expects the president to be the commander in chief of the economy, then we can't be surprised by nationalized banks and corporations.

If these historians are right, then there is sufficient reason to debate Reagan's status as the conservative's ideal executive. Conservatives ought to have enough confidence in their own principles to examine Reagan's ambiguous legacy in light of those very tenets. The history of his presidency ought to lead us

through a process, however painful, of self-examination. Reagan as conservative icon must not become a way to shut down debate within the conservative movement. Tag lines from his speeches must not serve as shortcuts to credibility for rising stars eager to become Reagan's heir. The late president's words doubtless conjure up optimism and help audiences feel good about being right-thinking conservatives. But a slogan like "city on a hill," repeated on cue with mind-numbing predictability, is unlikely to help the conservative movement, let alone the American people as a whole, to engage in the kind of hard thinking demanded by our economic troubles, precarious national security, and cultural meltdown. Maybe a boost of Reaganesque optimism is exactly what we don't need as a nation in the 21st century. Maybe the Reagan we think we remember is the very thing most likely to distract us from painful self-examination and serious reckoning with who we are as a people and how we got this way.

But now I sound too much like Jimmy Carter back in 1979. Nevertheless, 30 years later, in an America where the government and the media report a higher rate of personal savings and lower consumer credit-card debt as bad news, where patriotism has become defined in terms of getting and spending, where populist ideology threatens to wipe out property rights, and where Wilsonianism endures as the prevailing orthodoxy in foreign policy, we need to think beyond both Carter and Reagan. We need to ask perhaps the most conservative question of all: What kind of America will we leave to our children? What will they say about us at their 30th high school reunions? ■

Richard Gamble is author of The War for Righteousness and is at work on a book about how America became the "city on a hill."

What Would Burke Do?

The neglected tradition of high church conservatism

By Daniel McCarthy

EDMUND BURKE might not like what American conservatism has become. With its devotion to abstract rights, democracy, and perpetual growth, the American Right today looks more like a stepchild of Thomas Paine than an heir to the author of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. But Burke would recognize the conservative movement's rhetoric of liberty, its anti-elitism, and its alienation from institutions of authority. Those are the hallmarks of a disposition Burke described as "the dissidence of dissent, and the protestantism of the Protestant religion." In 1775, that was how he characterized the creed of Britain's rebellious New England colonies. Today, those words apply to the faith of many in the Republican Party's base.

Burke was no Protestant, though he was not Catholic either. (His mother, wife, and sister were.) He was an Anglican who defended the establishment of the Church of England, even as he eloquently argued for toleration of Dissenters—that is, Protestants—and Catholics. Indeed, he wrote to his friend Thomas Erskine, "I would give a full civil protection ... to Jews, Mahometans, and even pagans." Burke was, in the words of scholar Peter Stanlis, a "High Church Anglican" for whom "the Church of England was Protestant in her national sovereignty, but essentially Catholic in her inherited doctrines and forms of worship."

His attitude toward Dissenters—who sought to disestablish the national church or separate themselves from it—was ambivalent. In the case of the American colonists, he sympathized with their Whiggish political principles (he

was a Whig himself, after all), but the philosophy he espoused, most famously in *Reflections*, was a high church conservatism to match his High Church Anglicanism. His understanding of the proper relationship between faith, culture, and politics was very different from that of the radical Protestants, whose anti-establishment views held revolutionary implications for the social order.

High church conservatism may seem odd to Americans accustomed to the culturally Protestant and politically populist low church variety. But Burke was just the first in a long tradition. "A considerable amount of English conservatism," sociologist Robert Nisbet noted, "beginning with Burke and extending to such minds as Coleridge, Newman, Disraeli and Matthew Arnold, was activated and shaped by the religious revolution ... that paralleled the democratic and industrial revolutions."

Not all high church conservatives are Anglican; some are not even religious. Similarly, not all right-wing Anglicans or Catholics are politically high church. Perhaps the majority of Catholic conservatives today, swayed by Republican propaganda, have assimilated downward to the low church conservatism of their allies. The distinction arises not from doctrine but from one's overall approach to politics.

Low church conservatism, more familiar, is readily described. It has five common characteristics. First, it values faith over works—what counts is the character of a politician and the intentions behind his actions, not the outcome of his policies. No man, of course,

can read another's soul, thus in practice the low church conservative places great value on professions of ideological purity. Sinning politicians like Newt Gingrich and David Vitter may be forgiven, so long as they say the right things. Disastrous policies—wars gone awry, for example—may be pardoned on account of righteous aims. Conversely, good works count for naught without profession of the right political faith.

Second, low church conservatism retains the anti-clericalism of its religious counterpart. This entails a pervasive anti-elitism. For the low church conservative, a popular broadcaster such as Rush Limbaugh possesses greater authority than a scholar such as Russell Kirk. The former derives his position from (or has it affirmed by) the congregation—his listeners. A Kirk, on the other hand, appears all too priestly. To be right requires no special learning, only acceptance of a basic creed.

A third trait is a tendency toward cultural separatism. The low church conservative prefers building parallel institutions to compromising with existing centers of authority. Sometimes this is commendable. More often, it is not. The proliferation of "conservative" movies, "conservative" dating services, "conservative" universities, and a "conservative" counter-counterculture—complete with "conservative" Che T-shirts—is emblematic. The low church conservative abhors the mainstream; the word itself is a pejorative.

Fourth is a belief that the eschaton is imminent (if not immanent). Every political battle is a clash of titanic principle, a

skirmish in the final conflict between light and darkness. Every bellicose dwarf in command of a developing nation is a potential Antichrist, or the geostrategic equivalent, a Hitler. No Saddam or Chavez is merely a tin-pot dictator.

Fifth, and most important, right makes might. Moral truth is easily known, and nothing should stand in the way of its application in policy. The goal of politics is to enact what is right and true. When a Bush administration official told Ron Suskind, "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality," he was not being cynical. He was naïve: for how could righteous men possessed of great power fail to achieve whatever they set out to do? From this logic, it follows that abortion can be ended and the sexual revolution repealed, if only we elect enough Republicans.

Not all of these convictions are blame-worthy. Some are justified. Much of the mainstream culture is irredeemable, even if conservative alternatives are lousy. Truth should prevail in politics: the high church conservative simply pursues this end in a different way, working through customs and institutions rather than against them. There lies a crucial distinction: low church politics dissolves hierarchies and structures. And it proceeds with the self-assurance of the elect, in contrast to the circumspection of high church conservatism.

For the low church conservative, politics is teleocratic—a purpose-driven activity. In the language of British philosopher Michael Oakeshott (very much a high church type), the low church conservative views the state—and perhaps his church, too—as an "enterprise association." The high church conservative, on the other hand, considers the state to be a "civil association," whose enjoyment is its own reward. He believes politics should be nomocratic—a matter of upholding a constitutional framework within which

diverse ends can be pursued. As Oakeshott says, "the intimations of government are to be found in ritual, not in religion or philosophy; in the enjoyment of orderly and peaceable behaviour, not in the search for truth or perfection."

Critics of the high church disposition in religion contend that it reduces faith to pure ritual—"bells and smells." A critic of high church conservatism might see in Oakeshott a correspondingly substance-free politics. Irving Kristol, for example, thought Oakeshott's philosophy "irredeemably secular" and "impossible for any religious person."

Yet Oakeshott is exceptional. For Burke and other high church conservatives such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge or Russell Kirk, politics does have limited substantial ends. But those ends are more open than liberal or libertarian critics of conservatism deign to acknowledge. There is a strong inclination among high church conservatives against interfering in the social order except to preserve its constitutional architectonics.

High church conservatism is the opposite of low church. It privileges works over faith, being more concerned with prudent policy than with the inner moral character of politicians or what they profess. It is deferential (sometimes to a fault) to hierarchy and suspicious (also sometimes to a fault) of popular movements and enthusiasm. It is leery of eschatological passions. And above all it works to avoid schism—the high church conservative's objective is to preserve the fabric of society and, so far as possible, elevate its culture. This, he believes, can only be done within the mainstream of national life. For Coleridge and the 19th-century poet and literary critic Matthew Arnold, the function of an established church is less religious than cultural. As Coleridge writes, "Christianity, and *a fortiori* any particular scheme of Theology derived and supposed (by its partizans) to be *deduced* from Christianity, [is] no

essential part of the *Being* of the *National Church*, however conducive or even indispensable it may be to its well-being..." Its being, or essence, is in the preservation of culture.

For his part, Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* proposed a dramatic solution for low church Protestantism's culturally schismatic tendencies—establish the Presbyterian and Congregational churches alongside the Church of England. That would inject "popular church discipline" into the establishment, while immersing the Protestants in the mainstream of the nation's culture. "Being in contact with the main stream of human life," he writes, "is of more moment for a man's total spiritual growth ... than any speculative opinion which he may hold or think he holds."

Some variation on this principle is an indispensable tenet of any high church conservatism, except perhaps Oakeshott's variety. And it is, of course, completely inapplicable to the American circumstance, where the First Amendment—to say nothing of public opinion—precludes the establishment of any religion. Nor are the federal government's cultural organs, such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, sufficient to fulfill the mission that high church conservatives ascribe to a national church. On this rock, the prospects for such conservatism in America might founder.

But not necessarily. High church conservatism has had a surprisingly robust history in the United States—a country born in a Whiggish and Protestant revolt. There may be less cause for astonishment than one might think. Before the Revolution, and for a while afterward, many of the colonies-cum-states had established churches, either Anglican or Dissenting. Though the Revolution was in no way high church and hastened disestablishment, the Consti-

tutional Convention was another matter. After all, it produced a nomocratic charter, sought to integrate potentially schismatic factions (big states, small states; slave states, free states), and was infused with a spirit skeptical of democracy (inspired in part by Shays's Rebellion). It is even tempting to suggest that the Constitution serves for Americans the same function that the Book of Common Prayer serves for Anglicans: uniting the high church and low in a formal or symbolic way rather than a doctrinally substantive one.

High church conservatives across the Atlantic, however, would be quick to observe that a constitution that fails to provide for continuity of culture may not succeed in perpetuating a form of government, either. To Coleridge, a national church, as a guardian of the national heritage and character, was as integral a part of the constitution as the state itself. Upon it depended "the morality which the State requires in its citizens for its own well-being and ideal immortality." This sounds very much like the "constitutional morality" that the American political theorist Willmoore Kendall argued was necessary for the operation of the Constitution—an ethical base to teach Americans how to select virtuous representatives, who in turn would exercise restraint and prudent deliberation in the wielding of power.

American high culture flourished in the 19th century in the absence of any substitute for the national church that Coleridge and Arnold desired, with New England in particular supplying a literature that aspired to be both world-class and quintessentially American. Yet New England's regional culture could not stand in for the constitutional ethos that Coleridge believed was necessary. Perhaps this lack of a national "constitutional" culture is one reason that Americans in the 20th century, waylaid by World War and Depression, drifted from their constitutional course.

The prime task of American conservatism should have been to correct that drift. In the 19th century there had been few self-conscious conservatives, but nomocratic traditions of politics remained strong, even after the disruption of the Civil War. America had discovered a back door to constitutional morality—not through a national church and culture but by way of another high church principle: federalism. The Anglican Communion itself is a federated body, while the Catholic Church has long endorsed the idea of subsidiarity—that needs should be met at the most local level possible, preferably through the institutions of civil society. Federalism was the matrix in which the impressive regional cultures of 19th-century America arose, and it accounts in large part for the survival of the constitutional ethic.

Once federalism had come under assault by successive waves of reformists and progressives, and as Leviathan extended its reach deeper into civil society, an energetic high church conservatism was needed to revitalize the constitutional order. But only the first intimations of such a thing arose in the 1950s, in the work of writers such as Peter Viereck, Russell Kirk, and Robert Nisbet. More than compensating for their salutary influence, however, was the advent of a militant Cold War conservatism. Although the intelligentsia of the Cold War Right was Catholic to a disproportionate degree—think of *National Review*, led not only by Catholic William F. Buckley Jr., but with senior editors Willmoore Kendall, L. Brent Bozell Jr., Frank Meyer, and James Burnham all crossing the Tiber sooner or later—it was also disproportionately populated by ex-radicals and ex-Communists. They retained the marks of their former faith even as they embraced a new one with zeal. The result was not low church conservatism but an ultramontane anti-Communist Right.

A high church Right might have taken its place after the fall of the Soviet Union. But before the end of the Cold War, conservatism in America experienced a Protestant Reformation, as the populist New Right of the 1970s opened the way for an evangelical influx into the Republican Party. For all the righteous energy the Moral Majority, Christian Coalition, and other Religious Right groups brought to conservatism, they lacked the high church concern for prudence and order. They were teleocratically driven at a time when America needed nomocratic conservatism.

Today, the American Right is divided between low church and "no church" tendencies. On one side are tea-party activists who believe that a renewed commitment to core conservative issues—God, guns, gays, and now taxes—will return the Right to power. On the other side are *soi-disant* "reform conservatives" who are not conservatives at all but social liberals (in the case of David Frum) or social democrats (in the case of the tokens on the editorial page of the *New York Times*). These "no church conservatives" are analogous to the liturgical traditionalists within the Anglican communion who nonetheless want to revise—or really reject—the moral content of traditional theology.

High church conservatism remains to be rediscovered. It will not offer the Right an easy road to power, but then that is not what it is meant to do. More important than reclaiming Congress or the White House, or even "winning" on specific issues, is the task of restoring the constitution—not only the written Constitution but also the cultural framework that must undergird it. Without an institutional, national clerisy, high church conservatives are in the awkward position of having to anoint themselves for the task. But after 30 years of low church conservatism, some alternative must be found. ■

All On Brown

Now is as good a time as any to put some money on Gordon Brown to lead the Labour Party to victory in the next British general election. Don't get me wrong. I am

not saying that there will be an election. By the time it finally falls due—in June of next year—we may well be done with such fripperies as democracy.

Nor am I saying that Brown will win. At one point in mid-April, the Tories were 17 points ahead of Labour, and David Cameron looks certain to be the next prime minister. But who wants to bet on a certainty, go with the flow? That's no way to make money or lose friends.

Besides, anything can happen between now and next June. There could be a recovery. I really do not mean to be a scaremonger, but it is not beyond the realms of possibility that the economy will have begun to revive by the time Brown has to go to the polls. If next spring things are looking better—if, in particular, house prices have started to rise again—Brown will be in with a chance. Many voters would give him credit for the upswing and be reluctant to trust the Tories to lead them back to the sunlit uplands of house-price inflation.

That's why David Cameron must be praying that there is no recovery. As good as things look for the Tories, they still need good luck—i.e., rising unemployment, negative equity, repossession, soaring knife crime—if they are going to make it to Downing Street.

At the moment, they are lucking out. Cameron got a nice bounce as a result of what has become known, inevitably, as Smeargate.

Here's the scoop: A Brown aide, Damian McBride, sent a former Labour Party official, Derek "Dolly" Draper,

some e-mails containing malicious rumors about senior members of the Conservative Party and their spouses. The idea was that the rumors should be posted by Draper on a new left-wing blog. The e-mails were "acquired" by a right-wing anarcho-libertarian blogger, Guido Fawkes, who passed them on to a couple of Tory newspapers, and there was an uproar. In their zeal to expose the peddlers of "vile smears" the newspapers repeated the smears, albeit obliquely, the way newspapers do when they are convinced they have seized the moral high ground but are not quite sure how best to exploit it.

I am obviously not going to repeat the smears here, other than to say that one newspaper reported the allegation that a prominent Tory had genital warts, thus producing the only laugh in the whole sorry business—Wart-ergate. But, oh, the howling and hissing from our moral guardians in the press. McBride resigned, Dolly said solly, even the prime minister apologized.

It's two minutes' hate every two minutes here. My wife says she is suffering from outrage fatigue. It was never like this in New Rochelle in the 1960s, but politics was real back then. Now, in England at any rate, there is no politics, nothing to choose between the parties, and hasn't been since Tony Blair took over Labour and clasped the City of London to his bosom. That's why politics is so dirty. Neither party has anything to sell, so they just trade insults. This is a beauty contest, in which both sides yell at the other.

Spin is king and queen. The Tories who have expressed shock and horror at Smeargate are rank humbugs. Their own director of communications is Andy Coulson, a former editor of the soft-core *News of the World*. While there, he employed a correspondent who hacked into the private conversations of members of the royal family. The reporter went to jail, and Coulson went to the Tory Party. Now art is imitating life.

Smeargate was given renewed edge on Easter Friday by the release of "In the Loop," a funny and relentlessly offensive movie, set in London and Washington, about the psychopathic conduct of spin doctors in the run up to an Anglo-American war against an unnamed Middle Eastern country.

It is shot through with great one-liners. "Sometimes it is necessary to climb the mountain of conflict," says a cowardly and biddable junior minister in a street interview with a herd of journos. Malcolm Tucker, the prime minister's monstrous press secretary—a no doubt defamatory version of Blair's PR attack dog Alastair Campbell—can't believe what he has just heard. "Climb the mountain of conflict!" he says. "He sounds like a f---ing Nazi Julie Andrews!"

The film has a serious flaw, however. It suggests that politicians and (even more) their minders set the agenda. But they don't. Journalists do, and woe betide any politician or spin doctor like McBride who gets on the wrong side of their agenda.

Still, the newspapers are not infinitely powerful, and their man Cameron can still lose. So put a hundred bucks on Brown, eh? It's only money. I put a hundred quid on McCain. ■

Summer of '69

Norman Mailer and Jimmy Breslin's campaign to liberate NYC

By John Buffalo Mailer

Can it be that the apparent desire of this city to destroy itself can be found in the newspapers themselves? God, they do not even honor their own. They seem to assume that used-up politicians, implicated politicians, and politicians with tongues waxed in old dead liberal wax are going to know more about running this city than two writers who have spent their last twenty years separately brooding, working, and writing about the problems of man and society, and the streets and people of this city.

—Norman Mailer and Jimmy Breslin
Open letter to the *New York Times*
June 15, 1969

FORTY YEARS AGO, my father wagered that he and Jimmy Breslin, two non-professional politicians, were better suited to save New York City than any career pol on the scene. So with Mailer for mayor and Breslin for city council president, they squared off in the 1969 Democratic primary against four standard-issue liberals. (Pop quipped of one, "I can't get a grasp on a mind this small." His campaign manager, Joe Flaherty, called another "eternally starched" and dismissed a third as a "municipal Lazarus.") Echoing the student slogan raised during the Columbia University crisis of the previous year, "No more bulls--t," they ran to rescue a "spiritless" city turned into a "legislative pail of dismembered organs."

Something vital had been lost along the way—a sense of place, of verve and nerve and wit. They were out to get it back, niceties of the political game be damned.

Their vision was as bold as their odds were long—20-to-1 by my father's estimate. But if New Yorkers took the bet, the shock to the system would provide enough momentum to make New York City the 51st state. Freed from its "marriage of misery, incompatibility, and abominable old quarrels" with the remainder of New York state, the city would reap a windfall of money and liberty sufficient to save it.

Pop figured, "The startled legislators of Albany and Washington would be face to face with a mighty fact: the bitterest and most apathetic and disillusioned electorate in the United States had spoken in a thunderous affirmation—they wanted Statehood for themselves." He foresaw the city, its independence secured, splintering into townships and neighborhoods, with their own school systems, police departments, housing programs, and governing philosophies. In some areas, church attendance might be obligatory, in others free love mandatory. "People in New York would begin to discover neighborhoods of the left, the right, and the spectrum of the center which reflected some of their own passions and desires and programs for local government," he wrote. One way or another, the city would come apart.

Gloria Steinem, Jack Newfield, and Noel Parmentel pitched the idea to him, guaranteeing its cross-partisan pedigree from the start. Murray Rothbard called it "the most refreshing libertarian political campaign in decades." He believed that "smashing the urban government apparatus and fragmenting it into a myriad of

constituent fragments" offered the only answer to the ills plaguing American cities and bestowed *The Libertarian Forum's* first political endorsement.

Partisans proved less enthusiastic, but then my father was no stranger to people thinking some of his ideas were crazy. He had long argued that plastic was poisonous and that television destroys the attention span. He considered abortion murder, but felt it should be legal until we evolve to the point of outlawing all war. What was more offensive, he wondered: the premature death of a 20-year-old soldier whom God had been cultivating for one purpose or another, or a life that He or She (he always used both when referring to God) had been nurturing for a mere three weeks?

His ideas enflamed, enriched, and deepened the public discourse for the second half of the 20th century and on into the Bush years. Because his point of view didn't attach to any political extreme, he wielded the double-edged sword of enlightening his audiences while forcing them to contemplate matters uncomfortable to their rigid ideologies. He took great pride in pronouncing himself a Left-Conservative—Left because he believed that desperate times required radical solutions, conservative because he distrusted centralized government. The label baffled even the more eclectic personalities he encountered on the various circuits. But in his view, Left and Right do not necessarily need to exist in solitary states. Rather, they could dwell together in a radically alternative system to the one we know today—one

in which governance belongs to local inhabitants bound by as little federal interference as possible. His claim to be running to the left and right of every man in the race was no gimmick.

Though largely mocked by the press—"the Mailer-Breslin ticket, running in fun..."—this wasn't street theater. "They never took us seriously," my father complained to *New York* magazine, "when in fact, we had more ideas than anyone else around." Theodore White, author of the *Making of the President* books, agreed, calling it "one of the most serious campaigns run in the United States in the last five years. ... his campaign was considered and thoughtful, the beginning of an attempt to apply ideas to a political situation." And make no mistake: Mailer and Breslin were in it to win. True, their slogan was unprintable, their speeches incorrect, their organization unorthodox. Calling your supporters "spoiled pigs" may not be a great strategy. But for all the flamboyance of their campaign, the duo was deadly serious. Breslin wrote:

In Manhattan, the lights seem brighter and the theatre crowds swirl through the streets and the girls swing in and out of office buildings in packs and it is all splendor and nobody sees the body punches that are going to make the city sag to its knees one day very soon. The last thing that New York can afford at this time is a politician thinking in normal politicians' terms. The city is beyond that. The City of New York either gets an imagination, or the city dies.

Their platform ran on that kind of creativity but didn't neglect common sense. At the time, New York City taxpayers were giving the state and federal governments \$14 billion, of which only \$3 billion was returned to the city. Under the City-State, an additional \$2 billion in revenue would come in to deal with local problems.

My father called for banning private cars in Manhattan, which would have reduced pollution by an estimated three-fifths. The number of cabs would increase, and passengers heading in the same direction could share cabs at a prorated fare. All city bus and subway transportation would be free, a monorail was to be built around the island, and publicly owned bicycles would be made available to all without cost.

WOULD IT HAVE **CLEANSED THE CITY'S SOUL** OR RESTORED SOME SENSE OF SMALL-TOWN IDENTITY? AT THE VERY LEAST IT WOULD HAVE **GOTTEN PEOPLE TALKING TO THEIR NEIGHBORS**, AN **ESSENTIAL ELEMENT** OF THE DEVOLUTIONARY PROJECT.

On the last Sunday of every month—Sweet Sunday—for 24 hours nothing would move or operate in the city except for emergency vehicles. No planes, trains, automobiles, or anything requiring electric power was to run, giving the city and her inhabitants a break from the humming of machinery and choking of exhaust pipes. If you lived on the 75th floor of a building, you had best plan in advance. The idea, Breslin wrote, was for "everything [to be] brought to a halt so human beings can rest and talk to each other and the air can purify itself." Would it have cleansed the city's soul or restored some sense of small-town identity? At the very least it would have gotten people talking to their neighbors, an essential element of the devolutionary project.

Under the Mailer-Breslin plan, immediate rent control would have been extended to all dwellings with two or more families. But neighborhoods would manage their own programs, with the City-State funding rehabilitation, not demolition. With the emphasis shifted from handouts to community restoration and neighborhood daycare programs, a person in need of welfare

would be beautifying his community while getting job-training in how to restore a house, bettering his credit, and building the foundation for an upwardly mobile lifestyle.

In an age of exploding crime, their default was again local: power to policemen who have the respect of the communities in which they live. The City-State would legalize heroin along the lines of the British methadone system

to cut down on drug-related crime and would create incentive programs to join local police forces, such as Breslin's idea of draft exemptions in exchange for short-term police service or credits to law-school students who served during peak crime hours.

Some of these ideas would have probably failed. Others would have half-worked, leaving people no more or less happy than under the old Albany system. Here and there a blighted neighborhood might have been transformed, reinforcing the belief that enabling local communities to self-govern was not only practically efficient but spiritually nourishing. It is difficult to imagine that New York would have been worse off.

We won't know. Mailer took just 5 percent of the primary—41,000 votes. Breslin got 66,000, later lamenting, "I am mortified to have taken part in a process that required bars to be closed." The young foot soldiers of the New Left bought in, but the "hip coalition of the left and right" they had envisioned never materialized.

My father did not live to see the election of Barack Obama, but I wonder what the original "Power to the Neigh-

When congressmen eventually leave the public trough on Capitol Hill, they regularly move over to K Street to become lobbyists, a richly deserved reward after years of selfless government service. Dennis Hastert of Illinois, the longest serving Republican speaker of the House of Representatives when he retired after the 2006 elections, is no exception. He is a senior adviser in the lobbying firm Dickstein Shapiro, home to former Arkansas senator Tim Hutchinson.

Justice Department records indicate that Hastert will now be "principally involved" on a \$35,000-a-month contract providing representation for the Turkish government. He will work as a subcontractor for another former House speaker, Dick Gephardt, who runs the eponymous Gephardt Group.

As Hastert, a former wrestling coach, presumably knows little about the country paying him, his true role will be networking with Congress to block any legislation that Turkey considers to be not in its interest. In that capacity, Hastert would be just one more ex-congressman on the make. But his relationship may be more complicated. FBI whistleblower Sibel Edmonds claimed that Hastert was investigated by the Bureau for accepting tens of thousands of dollars in illegal payments from Turkish lobbying groups in exchange for "political favors and information." Edmonds's claims have never been pursued, presumably because there are so many skeletons in both parties' closets. She has been served with a state-secrets gag order to make sure that what she knows is never revealed, a restriction that the new regime in Washington has not lifted.

In Hastert's case, it certainly should be a matter of public concern that a senior elected representative who may have received money from a foreign country is now officially lobbying on its behalf. How many other congressmen might have similar relationships with foreign countries and lobbying groups, providing them with golden parachutes for their retirement?

Hastert will, according to a letter from Dickstein partner Robert Mangas to the vice president of Gephardt's firm, be working "in connection with the extension and strengthening of the Turkish-American relationship." His primary focus will be on the Armenian genocide resolution that has been re-introduced in Congress and already has nearly 100 co-sponsors.

There have been few congressional resolutions as idiotic or harmful to the national interest, but the House seems intent on pressing forward, egged on by a powerful Armenian diaspora concentrated in southern California. Last time around, the resolution passed through the House Foreign Affairs Committee, but Speaker Nancy Pelosi intervened to prevent a vote of the entire House, effectively killing the bill. This time that tactic might not work. President Barack Obama has already described the killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915 as genocide, though he avoided that word on his recent trip to Turkey.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a fellow with the American Conservative Defense Alliance.

borhoods" candidate would have made of the community organizer become chief executive. Would he have seen him as just another conventional liberal politician consolidating power in Washington, or might he have seen him as representative of the fruit sprung from the seeds he and Breslin planted in '69? Another question comes to mind: in today's culture of viral messaging and alternative media, would Mailer-Breslin have been able to build the thunderous affirmation my father spoke of and ride that wave to statehood? If the Internet had existed in '69, is it possible, perhaps even likely, that they could have won?

My father and Jimmy used their celebrity as writers to get free press, the only hope for an underfinanced campaign working not only outside of, but in direct opposition to, the political machine. Obama wrote two bestselling books, propelling his rapid rise to the limelight. It's unlikely he would be president today without his talent as a writer.

Like my father, he understood the necessity of energizing ordinary people against the regnant establishment. A category-confuser by virtue of his physical appearance, Obama managed to convince a majority that Bush had done such a horrific job of running the country that old white men were no longer qualified to govern. Mailer-Breslin also sought to build a coalition of the dispossessed, yet had no means of showing skeptics the support they were getting on the street and channel that groundswell into mass appeal.

But four decades later and far beyond New York City, the Jeffersonian spirit that animated these two anti-politicians is more relevant than ever. The federal grip is no less strong. The communal bonds are even more frayed. The diagnosis my father delivered in his "Instru-

Continued on page 23

The Money Pit

Obama's bailouts, like Bush's unsustainable boom, are neither free-market nor socialist but state capitalist.

By Nicholas von Hoffman

ACCORDING TO the latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey, only 53 percent of American adults believe capitalism is better than socialism. Some 20 percent disagree and say socialism is better. Another 27 percent are not sure which is better. These sentiments may be the harbinger of something to come—although no one can say what.

Once upon a time, America was crawling with socialists. Oklahoma was swarming with them, as were Missouri, Wisconsin and Connecticut. San Antonio, Texas had a socialist mayor. A hundred years ago, the Socialist Party was electing scores of people to public office, but you can bet your decimated 401(k) that the people answering Rasmussen's phone calls know nothing of this or anything else about socialism.

In a society in which everyone except the homeless defines himself as middle class, including Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, class warfare will be a long time arriving. The Reds are not coming, at least not soon.

The middle-class millions may be of the opinion that injecting billions into financial institutions or backstopping the market for commercial paper or doing whatever the federal government is doing with the automobile industry is socialism. No socialist worth his salt would agree. He would call what is going on a chaotic form of state capitalism or what people in attendance at think-tank seminars refer to as private-public partnership.

Also open to question: whether those answering the survey have much of an idea what capitalism is. They seem to be saying that they are hurting, that their confidence in the old order has been fractured, and that they want change—big change. Other than Obama, the only other word they know for change is socialism.

Regardless of one's preferred -ism, what they are getting from the Obama administration resembles what they were getting from the George W. Bush administration—a costly attempt to put our financial Humpty-Dumpty back together again. Though Humpty may be as rotten an egg as you will find in the Wall Street hen house, both administrations have been trying to mend him by not repeating what they deem the mistakes of the Hoover-Roosevelt era.

Key figures in the two administrations often bring up the catastrophes of the early 1930s. Christine Romer, the chair of the Council of Economic Advisors, and Ben Bernanke, the chair of the Federal Reserve, achieved distinction in their academic incarnations as students of the period. So the question suggests itself—are they fighting the last war?

The ghost of the Great Depression haunts official thinking. Did the New Deal work? Did Roosevelt get America out of the Depression, or was it the coming of World War II? The old arguments are breaking out with new energy since they are but another way of arguing about what to do now.

Contrasting Great Depression America of the 1930s with Great Downturn America of the 2000s throws a light on the daunting problems facing us.

The gristly, hard-faced, slim-bodied Americans of the early 1930s do not even look like today's Americans. Obesity was not a national health problem then; malnutrition is not one now. Then few Americans took drugs for sickness or pleasure; now most do. Most babies were born to a man and woman who were married to each other.

Then not a drop of oil was imported; now over half is. Then we were trying to figure out how to put our idle factories back to work; now we are trying to figure out where our factories went. Then most of our people worked on the farm or in a factory; now they do neither.

Then was the age of steel, smoke, and grit, of large, loud machinery, green eyeshades and brass slide rules. Sixty miles an hour was fast. Now one person can do the work it took 25 to do in the 1930s, and 300 miles an hour is slow.

Then many fewer people went to high school and college; now half the country goes, yet we worry that our labor force lacks the skills and training to compete. Then entertainment was a rare treat; today it is an indispensable companion.

Then privileged kids had a bedroom of their own; now everybody does. Then a minority had a telephone; now it's iPhones and tweet, tweet, tweet. Then a family might have one car but they could repair it; now families have three auto-

mobiles and can't fix any of them.

Then no mechanism existed to stop the elevator from crashing down from prosperity's penthouse to a basement of joblessness, homelessness, and the shanty towns or Hoovervilles that speckled the map of America. Now unemployment compensation, Social Security, welfare, reverse tax payments, and countless other programs may not put the brakes on the Great Downturn but they have slowed the descent.

Then we were the world's largest creditors; now we are the world's largest debtors. Then American corporations, farmers, and banks, loaded with debt contracted in the 1920s, went bankrupt or fell beneath the auctioneer's gavel. Now the policy of the Bush-Obama

Then the Roosevelt administration was unable to develop and stick to a consistent set of policies with which to tackle the Great Depression. Now the Henry Paulson-Timothy Geithner policy is a consistent one of pushing money into all leaking financial ships to forestall bankruptcy, cost what it may.

For smarter liberals and conservatives, the contrast between the former America and the present one must raise enormous questions. Liberals have had to take another look at their chosen instrument for achieving their wide and generous ambitions, the federal government. Conservatives, who have taken the government's measure and quite rightly found it wanting, must find something else to use in place of that dull and

and the boys on Wall Street and in Washington were blowing their bubbles, the United States had a zero savings rate. Capital was not invested in the kinds of enterprise and equipment that have made other high-labor-cost countries such as Germany and Japan competitive enough that they are not cracking under the weight of foreign debt.

The step-by-step, now-and-then comparison indicates that, bad as things were 80 years ago, Franklin Roosevelt had much more freedom of choice than Barack Obama does. The New Dealers were unencumbered by debt and by restrictive foreign commitments, economic and military. With some modifications they had the basics of an economy that could and did come back to life and roar forward.

Obama and modern America are not so lucky. This distressed economy is not one that can be, as they often put it, "kick started" back to what it was because its core structure was a bundle of unsustainable contradictions.

America needs a new business plan and the field is wide open for liberals or conservatives to devise one. ■

Nicholas von Hoffman is a former columnist for the Washington Post and Point-Counterpoint commentator for CBS's "60 Minutes." He is the author of many books including, most recently, Hoax.

THEN AMERICA WAS A **NATION AT PEACE WITH A SMALL MILITARY AND NO FOREIGN OBLIGATIONS** SAVE ITS PHILIPPINE COLONY. NOW AMERICA IS THE RICHEST NATION ON EARTH AND **PERPETUALLY AT WAR SOMEWHERE.**

administrations is to forestall bankruptcy and foreclosure by whatever means necessary. Then nothing was too big to fail; now everything is.

Then tariff walls were so high that the duty on anything from straight pins to automobiles meant nothing got into the country. Now a web of agreements makes protecting against many forms of foreign competition impossible without damaging repercussions.

Then America was a nation at peace with a small military and no foreign obligations save its Philippine colony. Now America, the richest nation on earth and most powerful by orders of magnitude, is almost perpetually at war somewhere.

Then, even after five or six years of Hoover-Roosevelt, the federal government was relatively small, open, flexible, and efficient. Now it is large, slow, opaque, and sclerotic.

rusty knife. Unless they believe that with lower taxes and the nondefense part of the government chopped in half the country can cure itself, they have some thinking to do.

When conservatives and liberals alike say their aim is to "get the economy going again," they are obliged to explain. Do they intend a return to an economy of 2 million new housing units a year and 16 million new cars? The ones we have are yet to be paid for.

Left and Right speak about the necessity of getting people back in the stores buying anything and everything, but the discussion concerning who will lend America the money to pay for private consumption or public infrastructure is perfunctory. The Chinese have been telling us that the days of their taking all the debt we want to contract are over.

When the economy was humming

Visit our blog

@TAC 

www.amconmag.com/blog

updated daily

By the Book

Even in the Kindle age, the printed page still has its place.

By Jeremy Beer

NO INDUSTRY FRETS about its future more than publishing. “How do you make a small fortune in publishing? Start out with a large fortune” runs one of the gallows-humor jokes told by publishers for the better part of a century now. The latest round of handwringing occasioned by the state of the economy, Kindle, Amazon’s aggressive advance, the teetering of Borders, the declining percentage of Americans who read—things any publisher worth his salt would be happy to discuss if you have a spare hour—is not exactly out of character.

Perhaps things are different this time. The digital age is certainly destroying the newspaper and magazine industries. (And who needs news and journalism when we can just comment on one another’s opinions all day?) But what about book publishing? Is the *Economist* right to speculate, as it did in February, that it “seems likely that, eventually, only books that have value as souvenirs, gifts or artefacts will remain bound in paper”?

In some genres, yes, the printed book can’t compete with electronic editions. This is already true for scientific and technological textbooks. Likewise reference works and travel guides—anything in which the purpose is to convey precise, timely information and the pleasure of reading is at best a tertiary consideration. For many other genres, however, the immediate ascension of e-books over their printed brethren seems highly doubtful. Kindle users don’t buy fewer printed books. They simply add e-books. And the easy

availability of recipes online hasn’t exactly made cookbooks disappear: quite the opposite.

The printed book is itself an amazingly efficient piece of technology. It is highly scannable, allowing the user to perceive, assimilate, and make connections among dozens of bits of information in very little time by flipping through pages, perusing the table of contents, or reading jacket blurbs. The nature of the book’s physical qualities is itself an important conveyor of information. Trim size, binding, font, cover design, and layout all say something to the reader. Who doesn’t prefer using a good index in a printed book to doing a search in a PDF document? It’s easier, faster, and better for making sense of the context of any particular entry.

Moreover, books are more than just information providers. They are aesthetically appealing. As tactile objects, as physical products of human art and ingenuity, they are attractive. Do you get the same sense of anticipatory pleasure when you imagine curling up at night, or on a rainy day, with your laptop as you do with a book? Perhaps you do. Maybe most people do. But many do not.

Of course, there are definite disadvantages to printed volumes. For consumers, these include portability, timeliness, speed of delivery, and, to a lesser extent, cost. For publishers, expense heads the list. Books are pricey to print, bind, and ship. Cut out these expenses, and the costs of editing, designing, and marketing books suddenly become much more absorbable.

So, more likely than the near extinction of printed books is the development of a situation in which e-books complement but do not replace them. The book industry could actually become larger and more profitable once a standard, consumer-friendly e-book delivery system becomes available. Contrary to all expectations, the publishing industry may soon be on the come.

But why do we even need publishers? That is the question posed, rhetorically and flatteringly, by the companies eager to help a budding author self-publish his masterpiece. Why settle for a measly 10 percent of the revenues when you can front the costs and then use the miraculous power of New Media to sell your fascinating tome? Not a bad idea, for some authors. Alas, many more have learned that this is a good way to sink \$10,000 into a decade’s worth of Christmas gifts for friends, family, and favorite waitresses.

Self-publishing has not become the panacea it promised to be because publishers serve functions far beyond the provision of capital and the dumping of manuscripts into design templates. They have marketing muscle. They employ sales representatives to pitch books to buyers at Ingram, Borders, Barnes & Noble, and major independents across the nation. They offer access to distribution channels, customer service, and bookkeeping. And they provide, or should provide, expert editing and production skills that will bring a messy manuscript into readable form.

Even more important than the services publishers provide to their authors is the essential screening function they offer consumers. If no publishers existed, we would have to invent them. It would simply be too time-consuming and inefficient to find, among the countless books put out by self-proclaimed authors, the few that actually have merit.

Nearly everyone looks askance at the role of cultural gatekeeper or credentialer these days, for good reasons and bad. But what Ken Myers, editor of the *Mars Hill Audio Journal*, calls the “loss of cultural authority” is something that conservatives should think hard about in this context. Even the digital entrepreneurial pioneer Andrew Keen, Myers writes, has come to see that “the survival of the very best forms of cultural expression ... requires a network of mediation and accreditation.” Publishers serve a crucial function as “cultural institutions.” Yes, such institutions “can be corrupted and standards can become debased.” Nevertheless, without them, the appearance of truly innovative, world-expanding, great works of art and thought becomes less likely—and the pervasiveness of schlock much more so. “Without some form of institutionalized judgment established over time in communities of expertise, without, that is, some knowledgeable person to tell you your work isn’t good enough to be published,” Myers writes, “cultural expression easily becomes mere self-expression.”

Thus, the screening function remains practically necessary and culturally important. In the future, people will be no more likely to waste time and money on products of low quality if there are better alternatives. Self-publishing is not likely to become as prestigious or as lucrative as publishing with a respected imprint.

Does that mean that, except for the

dwindling number of special-imprint internment camps created solely for their use, conservatives will remain locked out of a mainstream publishing world unalterably hostile to their ideas?

Are they really locked out now? Mainstream publishers’ biases against conservatives have been greatly exaggerated. Serious, right-leaning authors have always found homes. John Lukacs is published by Yale University Press and Basic Books. Andrew Bacevich writes for Holt and Harvard. Walter McDougall has published with HarperCollins, Houghton Mifflin, and Basic Books. Tom Wolfe. Pat Buchanan. David McCullough. Clearly, these authors have varying convictions and theoretical commitments. But what they have in common is more important: they are not partisan toadies, and they are all supremely talented.

There’s your bias. Untalented liberal hacks can get published by the mainstream imprints, but conservatives burdened with mundane abilities and superficial insights must look elsewhere or keep the manuscript in the drawer. All to the good. How ironic that our publishing houses have kept the gates of culture better for conservatives than for liberals. Let us applaud their defense of high standards.

Even so, it must be confessed that there is a depressing similarity of vision and background at the major presses. Editors are drawn from the same Seven Sisters schools and country club pools. And they’re virtually all in New York, which is fine if you’re as smugly provincial as a *New York Times* editor, but some of us think that it would be nice for other provincialisms to have a cultural voice. As a result, it is certainly true that talented writers with unapproved views often find it unnecessarily difficult to reach the audience and to achieve the influence that their work deserves.

What to do? Consider this historical counterfactual: What if, as their namesake movement was coalescing in the 1950s and ’60s, conservative elites had decided to invest in culture rather than politics—in New York instead of Washington? What if their programs, scholarships, fellowships, conferences, and summer institutes had been geared toward identifying talented students and writers, exposing them to conservative perspectives, preparing them for entry into the world of high culture—including the worlds of serious trade and academic publishing? This would not have been a hopeless tack. After all, most publishers and many other high-culture institutions aim to make money, and if a prospective employee can advance that aim, intellectual prejudices are not insuperable. Besides, those prejudices may not have been very strong had conservatism not been so politicized, thanks to the Washington strategy.

Some of these young writers would have doubtless made it big. They would now hold (or be retired from holding) high positions in the huge publishing conglomerates. A number would have formed their own houses and set up their own imprints. Perhaps some—let us dream—would have drifted back to Dallas and St. Louis and Boise and started publishing houses there. Others would have become agents, buyers, bookstore owners, distributors, editors, reviewers, essayists, publicists, and the like. The publishing landscape would be very different.

That same strategy could still be undertaken today in ways large and small. But it would require the kind of open-ended, risky investment in thought—what the old-time great-books types called “the adventure of ideas”—that only truly enlightened patrons are willing to undertake. I’m not sure that they’re out there, though that shouldn’t stop brave young men

and women of a literary bent from adopting such a strategy on an individual basis.

Otherwise, if they find the walls of the mainstream houses impenetrable, conservatives are left with nontraditional options. Self-publishing is unlikely to become more prestigious, but micropublishing is well suited to take advantage of the opportunities of the digital age. The capital barriers are low and getting lower. Perhaps we will see the advent of small, nonpartisan, conservative-leaning but open-minded for-profit presses. Even local centers, institutes, and think tanks could easily launch their own imprints. The time is ripe, too, for imaginative middlemen: distributors, consultants, marketers, agents—yes, thanks for asking: I work in these fields—who can help small-fry start swimming in the big publishing pond.

This could mean a more intelligent, interesting, and diverse landscape for conservative authors and ideas. Maybe a more golden age, even, than the one that flourished, according to Adam Bellow, in the halcyon George H.W. Bush days. Perhaps one like that interlude in the 1950s, when Richard Weaver and Friedrich Hayek could publish with the University of Chicago Press and Henry Regnery could publish genuine philosophers and courageous iconoclasts. Or even, perhaps, one like that truest of golden ages, before World War II when T.S. Eliot's arch-traditionalist books on culture and the Christian society could be published by Harcourt Brace, and when a volume such as *I'll Take My Stand* could be brought out by Harper & Brothers—that is, an age when the conservative and liberal might again lie down like the lamb and the lion beside the desk of the very same publisher.

Chaos, after all, means opportunity. ■

Jeremy Beer was principal editor at ISI Books from 2000 to 2008.

Guilt Trip

Eric Foner writes history to suit the politically correct Left—and the neocons.

By Paul Gottfried

ERIC FONER, DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University, is the most professionally successful academic historian of our time. He has served as president of all three major historical organizations, published a widely acclaimed book on Reconstruction as “America’s unfinished revolution,” and appears frequently on national television. He and a likeminded historian, James McPherson, have been conspicuously urging President Obama to sustain affirmative action and consider reparation payments for the descendants of American slaves. Foner has put before the public what he considers the unfinished civil-rights agenda in his 2002 textbook *Give Me Liberty: An American History* and in other books written for a popular readership, such as *The Story of American Freedom* and *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*. Rarely has an historian had such abundant opportunities to shape public consciousness on a critical social issue.

Foner’s vision of American history comports with the political correctness favored by the Left today—indeed at times he seems less interested in Reconstruction than in reconstructing latter-day American society. Surprisingly, or perhaps not, this project has won him influential admirers among the Republican Party. But even as Foner invokes the legacy of slavery and other racial iniquities as pretexts for government-mandated “social justice” and sensitivity

today, he has never had to say he was sorry that he and his family whitewashed the crimes of Stalin’s USSR.

Foner has earned high praise from George W. Bush’s gray eminence, Karl Rove. A 2003 *New Yorker* profile by Nicholas Lemann noted that one of Rove’s favorite books was Foner’s study of the early Republican Party, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*. According to Lemann, Rove read the book “less as a dispassionate analysis of the early Republicans’ strengths and weaknesses than as a guidebook on how to broaden the appeal of the Party.” Foner was delighted to learn of this: “Karl Rove is my man,” he told his class at Columbia, even as he continued to hold Rove’s employer in disregard. In 2006, Foner published a *Washington Post* op-ed saying of President Bush, “He’s the Worst Ever.” “I think there is no alternative but to rank him as the worst president in U.S. history,” Foner wrote, comparing him unfavorably even to the alleged “fervent white supremacist” Andrew Johnson.

Despite the professor’s Bush-bashing, Rove clearly respects Foner, and so it is perhaps not remarkable that certain phrases from Foner’s ideas about “the unfinished revolution” popped up in Republican campaign literature during the 2006 midterm elections. Party strategists evidently decided that linking the Union side in the Civil War with the later civil-rights agenda would provide a useful metaphor for the war to build democracy in Iraq. The plan only partly

succeeded. Although Rove's party picked up votes from the descendants of those who bled and died on the Confederate side, it did far less well among black voters.

Foner's appeal to the Left and to vote-seeking Republicans such as Rove is as much moral as historical. But on both accounts, there are reasons to have deep reservations about the Columbia professor. As the late liberal historian John Patrick Diggins noted, for Foner "Liberal America, it seems, must remain forever corrupted by slavery while Bolshevik Russia remains, even in the historical past tense, forever free of tyranny. Foner ... is both an unabashed apologist for the Soviet system and an unforgiving historian of America."

Foner's father and two of his uncles had been associated with the American Communist Party, something the professor has never deplored. In fact, in a 1994 exchange in *Dissent* with historian Eugene Genovese, Foner brushed off the accusation that he and other Communist sympathizers had failed to "ask

cism ... and with various expressions of right-wing ideology." Foner and his family had supported the Communist Party to the extent that it represented antiracism and such other commendable positions as "anti-Fascism, promotion of colonial independence and opposition to the war in Vietnam." What Genovese called their "silence in the face of unspeakable crimes" had come from an awareness of "the Communists' contributions to some of the country's most important struggles for social betterment." Foner and his family had been too busy fighting for equality to worry about the problem of making common cause with the Communists.

According to Foner, what divided him and Genovese was not so much their relation to the Soviet past as where they stood on present-day issues. Genovese had never made the transition to the New Left's agenda of "social change." Entrenched in the views that "human nature is immutable, hierarchy inevitable, equality impossible, the desire for personal autonomy perni-

now routinely condemned as an apologist for slave-owners, had provided what was essentially the Marxist account of Reconstruction. According to Stamp, Marxists took Dunning's work on Reconstruction as a given and then tried to refine his account of the exploitation of the defeated South. This effort yielded results very different from Foner's.

In this shared Marxist-Dunningite view, the Northern occupation of the South involved the extensive confiscation of property and money. It was carried out by grasping Northern capitalists, who used former black slaves as an interim government, while stripping of their rights as citizens Southerners who in any way assisted the Confederacy. Among Radical Republicans could also be found predatory state capitalists, who, as the historian Ludwell Johnson has shown, dragged off what they could of the resources of their defeated enemies. Among their acts of political corruption was to have Southern tax money transferred to the coffers of the national Republican Party. In the end, even strong opponents of slavery and admirers of Lincoln expressed indignation over these outrages. While for Foner and others of his school Lincoln's successor Andrew Johnson was a reactionary racist who deserved to be impeached in 1868 by the Radical Republicans, in the older view to which the Marxists subscribed, Johnson was the victim of capitalist predators.

Today the emphasis of left-wing historiography is less on economic exploitation than the politics of guilt. Thus Johnson's willingness to grant pardons to Southern whites, in order to restore their voting rights, and his veto of a comprehensive civil-rights bill for black freemen in 1867 because of his opposition to federalized law enforcement, are now viewed as evidence of Johnson's stubborn racist character. Foner believes the attempt to remove Johnson from the

TODAY THE **EMPHASIS OF LEFT-WING HISTORIOGRAPHY** IS LESS ON ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION THAN THE **POLITICS OF GUILT**.

the big question"—namely, why the Left defended one of the most murderous regimes in history. In his opening statement, Genovese said that he "expected Foner ... to do everything in his power to obfuscate the issues, for he ranks among the leaders of the thinly disguised [Stalinist] totalitarianism in which the American Left wallows." Genovese was a Marxist historian himself and a former Communist supporter.

Foner responded that although Genovese "refers to himself as part of the left, his current outlook has far more in common with a long tradition of elitist antiliberalism, including Tory romanti-

cious," Genovese had hidden for years behind outmoded Marxist theories in order to resist pressing issues. It was Foner, not Genovese, who stood for where the Left was now going.

That much, at least, was true. Foner represents the politically correct Left, which should not be confused with theoretical Marxism or, for that matter, with any other Left. In fact, the revisionist turn in Reconstruction studies, of which Foner's work has been so great a part, is clearly non-Marxist, as another left-wing revisionist, Kenneth Stampp, observed in 1966. W.A. Dunning, an early 20th-century authority on Reconstruction who is

presidency in 1868 was fully justified, and it is Johnson, not steel barons like Thaddeus Stevens and others who profited from the South's defeat, who is the true villain in this narrative.

More is at work here than the condemnation of the American past as racist or the call for a new, government-imposed direction in race relations. By the 1980s, the Left in general had changed in such a way that all references to Foner as a "Marxist" or "neo-Marxist" had become misleading. The Left had ceased to be interested in Communism, even if leftists continued to defend it as an unfairly vilified or mostly irrelevant phase in their own development. After the 1960s, what was most important was combating "fascism," "racism," "sexism," and "homophobia."

Foner's work was on the cutting edge of this trend. It was henceforth important to underscore how bigoted white Americans had been in the past and why it was essential to retrain the majority population so that they would acknowledge the social guilt of their forefathers. While the older Marxist history had emphasized social consciousness and class conflict, the new line, exemplified by the Reconstruction revisionists, would be the politics of indignation.

This is a narrative that is useful to others beyond the Left—not limited to Karl Rove. Whether out of a desire to curry favor with left-leaning media or to beat the politically correct revisionists at their own game of blaming all America's faults on the South, neoconservatives have accepted much of Foner's account. Victor Davis Hanson, Richard Brookhiser, and Max Boot have all presented the American Civil War as a necessary trauma in achieving a democratic transformation. In particular, Hanson has spared no venom in applauding the physical and political destruction of those who backed the Confederacy. Recently Ira Stoll, the former managing editor of the *New York*

Sun, ferociously attacked Jimmy Carter in the *New York Daily News* for having dared to suggest that slavery might have been abolished peacefully, without the bloodbath of the Civil War. Stoll's response might have been taken from Foner or John Brown: "How much patience should Lincoln have had with the immoral institution? How many more lashes should have fallen on the backs of American blacks during Carter's hypothetical waiting period for slavery to terminate 'peacefully'?"

Neoconservatives, including Ronald Radosh writing in *National Review*, have criticized Foner's reluctance to come to terms with the evils of Communism. But they have not attacked, and indeed have tended to embrace, his work on Reconstruction and his politically correct condemnation of all things Southern. Foner's work has made strange ideological bedfellows—just as, conversely, today the traditionally critical account of Republican rapacity during Reconstruction is championed not by old leftists but by paleo-libertarian authors such as Thomas DiLorenzo and Kevin Gutzman.

Foner's revisionist history is not more accurate than the work of his Marxist and right-wing critics. But it is more useful to those who hold power: to the politically correct leftists who dictate the terms of discourse in academia and to the Republicans and neoconservatives who exercise a parallel hegemony over the Right. Just as the truth of Communism's crimes is discarded by a Left that sees evil only in America, Rove and his ideological enablers are happy to use long-dead Southerners as scapegoats to justify their own democratic crusades. ■

Paul Gottfried is Raffensperger Professor of Humanities at Elizabethtown College and the author of Encounters: My Life With Nixon, Marcuse, and Other Friends and Teachers.

Mailer

Continued from page 16

ment of the City" might have been written yesterday:

... the old confidence that the problems of our life were roughly equal to our abilities has been lost. Our authority has been handed over to the federal power. We expect our economic solutions, our habitats, yes, even our entertainments, to derive from that remote abstract power, remote as the other end of a television tube. We are like wards in an orphan asylum. The shaping of the style of our lives is removed from us—we pay for huge military adventures and social experiments so separated from our direct control that we do not even know where to begin to look to criticize the lack of our power to criticize. We cannot—the words are now a cliché, the life has gone out of them—we cannot forge our destiny. ... We wait for abstract impersonal powers to save us...

In an age when evolving problems need new approaches perhaps more than ever, one hopes that the artists and the businessmen, the plumbers and the architects, the house-painters and the restaurant owners, rather than wait for their problems to be solved from above, might look to the Mailer-Breslin campaign for inspiration. They can make their city a better, more interesting place, one block at a time. ■

John Buffalo Mailer recently produced a documentary adaptation of Naomi Wolf's best selling book, The End Of America. He is editor at large for Stop Smiling magazine.

The Harding Way

The president infamous for Teapot Dome knew that cutting government was the best way to end a depression.

By Thomas E. Woods Jr.

WHEN BARACK OBAMA urged passage of his so-called stimulus measure in February, he claimed that only bold government action would prevent the economy from slipping into a deep depression. In making that argument, he was only repeating the conventional wisdom, according to which markets are not self-correcting—except in the very long run—and state intervention is necessary to revive economic activity.

Economic theory can tell us why these claims are incorrect and why, in fact, even the appearance of prosperity that those measures can produce causes still greater damage and leads to a more severe correction in the long run. But we can also refer to the testimony of history. In particular, the depression of 1920-21, which most people have never heard of, is an example of the resumption of prosperity in the absence of government stimulus, indeed in the face of its very opposite. If economies cannot turn around without these interventions, then what happened in this instance should not have been possible. But it was.

During and after World War I, the Federal Reserve inflated the money supply substantially. Once the Fed finally began to raise the discount rate—the rate at which it lends to banks—the economy slowed as it started readjusting to reality. By the middle of 1920, the downturn had become severe, with production falling by 21 percent over the next 12 months. The number of unemployed

people jumped from 2.1 million in 1920 to 4.9 million in 1921.

From 1929 onward, Herbert Hoover and then Franklin Roosevelt tried to fight an economic depression by making labor costlier to hire. Warren G. Harding, on the other hand, said in the 1920 acceptance speech he delivered upon receiving the Republican nomination, “I would be blind to the responsibilities that mark this fateful hour if I did not caution the wage-earners of America that mounting wages and decreased production can lead only to industrial and economic ruin.” Harding elsewhere explained that wages, like prices, would need to come down to reflect post-bubble economic realities.

Few American presidents are less in fashion among historians than Harding, who is routinely portrayed as a bumbling fool who stumbled into the presidency. Yet whatever his intellectual shortcomings—and they have been grotesquely exaggerated, as recent scholars have admitted—and whatever the moral foibles that afflicted him, he understood the fundamentals of boom, bust, and recovery better than any 20th-century president.

Harding likewise condemned inflation: “Gross expansion of currency and credit have depreciated the dollar just as expansion and inflation have discredited the coins of the world. We inflated in haste, we must deflate in deliberation. We debased the dollar in reckless finance, we must restore in honesty.”

And instead of promising to blow unprecedented sums, he called for cutting back:

We will attempt intelligent and courageous deflation, and strike at government borrowing which enlarges the evil, and we will attack high cost of government with every energy and facility which attend Republican capacity. We promise that relief which will attend the halting of waste and extravagance, and the renewal of the practice of public economy, not alone because it will relieve tax burdens but because it will be an example to stimulate thrift and economy in private life.

The economy, Harding explained in his Inaugural Address the following year, had “suffered the shocks and jars incident to abnormal demands, credit inflations, and price upheavals.” Now the country was enduring the inevitable adjustment. No shortcuts were possible:

All the penalties will not be light, nor evenly distributed. There is no way of making them so. There is no instant step from disorder to order. We must face a condition of grim reality, charge off our losses and start afresh. It is the oldest lesson of civilization. . . . No altered system will work a miracle. Any wild experiment will only add to the confusion. Our best assurance lies in efficient administration of our proven system.

Harding was true to his word, carrying on budget cuts that had begun under a debilitated Woodrow Wilson. Federal spending declined from \$6.3 billion in 1920 to \$5 billion in 1921 and \$3.3 billion in 1922. Tax rates, meanwhile, were slashed—for every income group. And over the course of the 1920s, the national debt was reduced by one third.

In contrast to Japan, which engaged in massive government intervention in 1920 that paralyzed its economy and contributed to a severe banking crisis seven years later, the U.S. allowed its economy to readjust. “In 1920-21,” says economist Benjamin Anderson,

we took our losses, we readjusted our financial structure, we endured our depression, and in August 1921 we started up again. ... The rally in business production and employment that started in August 1921 was soundly based on a drastic cleaning up of credit weakness, a drastic reduction in the costs of production, and on the free play of private enterprise. It was not based on governmental policy designed to make business good.

That is not supposed to happen, or at least not nearly so quickly, in the absence of fiscal or monetary stimulus. But who are you going to believe, Paul Krugman or your own eyes?

Naturally, some modern economists who have looked into the matter have been stumped as to how economic recovery could have occurred in the absence of their cherished proposals. Robert Gordon, a Keynesian, admits, “government policy to moderate the depression and speed recovery was minimal. The Federal Reserve authorities were largely passive. ... Despite the absence of a stimulative government policy, however, recovery was not long delayed.” Kenneth Weiher, an economic historian, notes, “despite the severity of

the contraction, the Fed did not move to use its powers to turn the money supply around and fight the contraction.” He then briskly concedes that “the economy rebounded quickly from the 1920-1921 depression and entered a period of quite vigorous growth,” but (as with most such historians) he chooses not to dwell on this development or learn anything from it.

Weiher, in fact, notes with some condescension that “this was 1921, long before the concept of countercyclical policy was accepted or even understood.” Er, yes, and lacking those indispensable tools, the American economy rebounded all the same.

HARDING'S ADVICE AND COURSE OF ACTION ARE BASICALLY **THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM** IN POLITICAL AND MEDIA CIRCLES TODAY.

The reader has probably noticed that Harding's advice and course of action are basically the exact opposite of the conventional wisdom in political and media circles today. The government has to do something, we're told. Barack Obama has said that economic downturns degenerate into long-term depressions because governments fail to act with sufficient vigor to head them off.

It is not mere coincidence that the economy returned to health relatively quickly following the downturn of 1920, while on the other hand depression conditions persisted throughout the 1930s, a decade of government activism. It is precisely because monetary and fiscal stimulus measures were avoided that sound economic progress was possible.

The very ideas of fiscal and monetary stimulus stem from a misdiagnosis of the causes of economic depressions and then apply exactly the wrong remedies. The problem is not with an inadequate level of spending, but that in the wake of a central bank-induced boom, the capital

structure is out of conformity with consumer demand. The recession is the period in which this mismatch is rectified through the reallocation of capital into more appropriate channels. Fiscal and monetary stimulus only interferes with and delays this purgative process.

Harding, unlike our political class today, actually understood this. The 20th-century president we're most taught to hate saw the United States through an even worse downturn than the one we're experiencing now by simply allowing the free market to make the necessary adjustments. And Harding, as his remarks indicate, pursued the policies he did not out of inertia or

because he was incapable of conceiving of alternative approaches. This despised figure was in fact a far better economist than most of the geniuses who presume to instruct us now.

Today we have a president urging us to learn the lessons of history, and there are indeed lessons to be learned. But to the state and its purchased intellectuals, history is an instrument to be placed at the service of the propaganda demands of the moment, not an impartial source of wisdom or instruction.

That's why watching events unfold in our own time is like watching a slow-motion train wreck. We know it has to end in disaster, and we're helpless to stop it. We know politicians won't learn whatever lessons history has to teach. But if they won't learn them, we must, if only to prepare ourselves for the disaster that is coming. ■

Thomas E. Woods Jr. is the author of nine books, most recently the New York Times bestseller Meltdown.

Finding Atlas

Before Ayn Rand there was Isabel Paterson.

By Stephen Cox

THE *ECONOMIST* recently reported that Ayn Rand's novel *Atlas Shrugged*, first published in 1957, is back on the bestseller lists. A week before the president's inauguration, more people were buying it than Obama's *Audacity of Hope*.

For the uninitiated, *Atlas* explores a future world in which the nation's economy is collapsing because of government interference. The theme developed out of Rand's own era: she started planning her novel in 1943, in the midst of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. But it's no wonder that it seems relevant today. New Deal activism, which was principally responsible for prolonging the Great Depression, guides our current economic stimulators.

Rand's disciples are a devoted lot. A recent issue of the *New Yorker* profiled one local group—the dentist with “John Galt,” the hero of *Atlas Shrugged*, on his license plate; the wealth manager who piously intones, “I’ve been a follower of Ayn Rand for five years”; the helpful fellow who suggests, “When civilization collapses, we’ll just have to organize an Objectivist gang.”

Mention the name Isabel Paterson in such a gathering, and you’re likely to draw blank looks. For all the fervor that Rand inspires, little notice is paid to the woman who most inspired her.

Paterson (1886-1961) was a novelist and literary critic. She was slight, just over five feet tall, with a delicate taste in food and drink, a deep love of nature, and a nationally famous sense of humor. Stubborn and sharp-witted, she was also one of the New Deal's fiercest foes.

Paterson grew up in poverty on the Western frontier. She had only two years of formal schooling. But she learned from her own experience, as well as her encyclopedic knowledge of history, that economic success results from individual initiative, not federal management. As an author, she also knew what makes a plausible story and could see that there could not possibly be a happy ending to the government's efforts to fix everything that was broken in the 1930s.

Both Roosevelt and his hapless predecessor, Herbert Hoover, tried to inspire confidence by keeping unsuccessful enterprises afloat at the expense of successful ones. Strangely, prudent investors declined to be stimulated, no matter how fervently they were exhorted to trust the government's programs. For Paterson, that result was tediously predictable. She told readers she was “tired of being told that ‘credit depends on confidence.’ Fudge. Credit depends on real assets, sound money and a clean record. ... When any one asks us to have confidence we are glad to inform him that the request of itself would shatter any remaining confidence in our mind.”

Then there was the issue of government planning. To Paterson, the notion that federal experts can plan to ensure the people's welfare was a ridiculous projection of childish fantasies—“a mother's boy economic program with a kind maternal government taking care of everybody out of an inexhaustible income drawn from mysterious sources.” Perfect planning requires per-

fect foresight—and who possesses that?

Paterson's *Golden Vanity*, one of the few good novels about the Depression, focuses on reputed experts' outrageous failures of foresight. Its climactic scene is a confrontation between an investor and the financier she entrusted with her money—a man who worked, with the government's assistance, to create a baffling maze of bad investments. When she hears him admit, “We could not foresee...,” she has finally had enough. “Why couldn't you foresee?” she demands. “If you can't foresee, what are you paid for?” She is wrathful, and there is dignity in her wrath.

The fundamental problem, Paterson proposed, is confusion of the economy with politics. In 1932, when Hoover was still in office, she said that “our ‘best minds’ ... have already got the political machinery dangerously entangled with the economic system, disrupting both; and they are now demanding that the government should save them from what they've done to it.” As others stood for separation of church and state, Paterson stood for separation of politics and business. She wanted no new government programs to save an economy that government programs had already disrupted. Readers wrote to her, asking her to identify her own plan for the government to solve the nation's problems. She replied, “What these correspondents really demand is dope. If we don't believe in their dope, what dope can we suggest in place of it? None whatever. We do not even know a remedy for gullibility.”

Her idea was simply to leave people alone to make their own investments, to earn profits and keep them, and to liquidate unprofitable enterprises. History backed her up. She remembered the nation's relatively quick recovery from the economic crisis of her girlhood, the depression of the 1890s: "This country experienced bankruptcy in the nineties. Part of the loss was borne by foreign bondholders. That part of the situation is now reversed. It is a much worse bankruptcy. But that is all it is." She knew that once the incompetent were permitted to go bankrupt, the competent could "pick up the pieces."

Such notions were contemptuously disregarded by the public intellectuals of the 1930s, men who considered Paterson a reactionary lady novelist, lacking the ability to comprehend big, hairy-chested Keynesian and Marxist theories. Edmund Wilson, America's leading young literary critic, informed Paterson that she was "the last surviving person to believe in [the] quaint old notions on which the republic was founded."

WHEN RAND PUBLISHED HER BREAKTHROUGH NOVEL, *THE FOUNTAINHEAD*, IN 1943, SHE INSCRIBED HER GIFT COPY TO PATERSON, "YOU HAVE BEEN THE ONE ENCOUNTER IN MY LIFE THAT CAN NEVER BE REPEATED."

She maintained, however, that "the principle of the lever remains the same." And she wasn't the last to believe in the old Republic. Among the rising generation of conservative and libertarian intellectuals whom she influenced was a young escapee from Soviet Russia, Ayn Rand. At that time, Rand was an author without an audience. An avid reader of Paterson's weekly newspaper columns, she sought the older writer's acquaintance during the dark days following the election of 1940, when the Republicans ignominiously lost to Roosevelt for a

third time. During the next few years, Rand sat at Paterson's feet, learning about economics, politics, and American history. When Rand published her breakthrough novel, *The Fountainhead*, in 1943, she inscribed her gift copy to Paterson, "You have been the one encounter in my life that can never be repeated."

Soon afterward, Rand started the long process of writing the 1,168-page *Atlas Shrugged*, a work of original genius that was nevertheless distinctively influenced by Paterson's ideas. Both women were rigorous individualists, but when it came to images of the capitalist system as a whole, Rand yielded to Paterson.

In Rand's opinion, *The God of the Machine*, Paterson's great work of economic and historical theory, "does for capitalism what *Das Kapital* did for the Reds" and "what the Bible did for Christianity." In her book, Paterson conceptualized capitalism as an enormous circuit connecting producers and consumers throughout the world, using real money and real profits to generate new efficiencies and larger amounts of energy. She

stipulated that government's proper role was to safeguard the infrastructure of this system, keeping it free from force and fraud. If government went beyond that and tried to manage the economy, it could only divert its energy and, eventually, short-circuit and destroy it.

This is exactly the way in which Rand depicts the world in *Atlas Shrugged*. The novel's central story concerns a railroad—a literal circuit of economic exchange—and the people who try to keep it running, despite the government's best efforts to connect it to proj-

ects that sap its energy. With every new government plan, with every new administrative proposal to stimulate a lagging economy, the railroad's profits dwindle, its lines shorten, industrialists who rely on it go bankrupt, and consumers have less access to the means of life. Eventually, there is a massive breakdown. The circuit of production and consumption can be reconnected only by individuals who plan their own economic behavior. The greatest of these is the man who best understands how energy is generated.

It is a compelling picture of the world—one that demonstrates the importance of the literary imagination as a generator of intellectual energy. Indeed, if modern conservative and libertarian ideas had been forced to wait until professional economists and politicians conveyed them to the public, they would never have been conveyed. The task required people of imagination who were willing to offer America an alternative vision of itself. To put it bluntly, the task required people who could really write.

That is why William F. Buckley Jr., laying the foundation for the modern conservative movement with the creation of *National Review* in 1955, identified Paterson as one of the people he most wanted to write for him. He got her, too—for a while. She left *NR* because—an individualist in every respect—she preferred not to be edited.

Paterson's relationship with Rand also fared badly. In 1948, an argument ended their friendship. As Paterson had written, "one genius is about all a house will hold," and each of these geniuses had a very considerable temper. But there was an even more important reason for the break-up: Paterson's belief in God.

This was not an unexamined assumption; it was an intellectual conviction,

Continued on page 34

Arts & Letters

FILM

[*State of Play*]

Capitol Offense

By Steve Sailer

"STATE OF PLAY" is an intermittently intelligent Capitol Hill thriller based on a celebrated 2003 BBC miniseries. The story was Americanized by at least five competent Hollywood hacks, such as Tony Gilroy, who wrote the similar "Michael Clayton," one of George Clooney's movies about a murderous corporate conspiracy that goes all the way to the top.

The new film starts out much like "Michael Clayton," with Ben Affleck as a Gary Condit-like congressman. (Politics may be show business for ugly people, but Affleck's convincingly wooden performance suggests that Congress is for handsome but mediocre thespians whose range is restricted to acting sincere.) The representative's Chandra Levy-like staffer, who is investigating a Blackwater-like mercenary-monger, is hit by a subway train.

After the politician persuades his Silda Spitzer-like wife to stand by him at a news conference where he admits to the affair, he hides out in the disheveled apartment of his former college roommate, an old-fashioned investigative journalist at a declining *Washington Post*-like newspaper. The besieged congressman discloses that he thinks his mistress was murdered because she was getting too close to the truth: the Blackwaterish firm is going to take over America with its private army.

Brad Pitt was cast as the reporter

hero of "State of Play," but walked away at the last moment due to script objections. I admired, however, the way the later plot developments undermined the clichés of Clooney's conspiracy genre. The boring truth is that in America, politically connected CEO's seldom rub out their rivals. As the Jane Harman-AIPAC wiretap scandal demonstrates, Washington conspiracies are mostly talk. Moreover, Russians and Mexicans scoff at the small sums that buy our politicians, such as the congressman caught with \$90,000 in his freezer. (Though now that so many trillions have gone up for grabs, perhaps we can hope our oligarchs will at least give us some satisfying entertainment in return for our bailout billions by starting to shoot each other over the money.)

With Pitt out, a pudgy Russell Crowe jumped in. Like Jeff Bridges in "The Big Lebowski," Crowe looks fat and happy in a role in which abs don't matter. Early in this decade, Crowe was the finest leading man in Hollywood, starring in "Gladiator," "A Beautiful Mind," "Master and Commander," and "Cinderella Man." Since then he seems to find himself with empty stretches on his schedule, perhaps because he's seen as an ornery party animal. (On New Year's Eve in 1999, while the rest of the world was timidly hunkering down in fear of Y2K glitches, Crowe celebrated with millennial gusto, getting himself arrested for disturbing the peace three times.) Crowe's Aussie manliness carries him through his under-rehearsed role, and the celebrity's personal distaste for journalists adds complexity to what could have been a routine hagiography.

To chase down the conspiracy, Crowe's veteran reporter teams up with a callow blogger (the ever-perky Rachel McAdams of "Wedding Crashers").

Much banter about the rivalry between print and online journalism ensues. Yet the movie misses the key personality difference between traditional media and the more Aspergery culture of the Web: newspaper reporters converse constantly, while Web people prefer Google to human contact. Blogger Matthew Yglesias recently declared, "Definitely the whole time I was employed at *The Atlantic* I never once returned a voice-mail. ... In general, I'm not a fan of talking on the phone..."

The movie portrays Crowe's aging reporter as a solitary man, trudging alone to confront the powerful in their lairs. In reality, as Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop* made clear, traditional reporters are most comfortable in packs, where they can gauge what's "appropriate" to ask and to write from the consensus of their colleagues.

Just when the strident soundtrack—synthesizers and militaristic drums relentlessly barking "Tense up!"—and now mandatory shaky-cam cinematography have almost ruined a decent if predictable story, an amusingly florid Jason Bateman shows up as a hedonistic public-relations consultant, seemingly to contrast the greed of the flack with the nobility of the crusading journalist. The film's countless screenwriters, though, are aware that reporters, such as the *New York Times'* Judith Miller, who pipelined so much pro-Iraq War propaganda, are often just more respectable PR agents, publicizing messages in return for access to newsmakers.

From there, the movie keeps departing from its earlier vast-corporate-conspiracy rut, ending with a plot twist that, while contrived, is surprisingly believable. ■

Contains violence, profanity, including sexual references, and brief drug content.

BOOKS

[1848: Year of Revolution, Mike Rapport, Basic Books, 496 pages]

Springtime of Their Discontent

By Septimus Waugh

IN EUROPE, we are living in stirring times. The long-drawn rumbles of discontent against the European Union suddenly seem more menacing as the effects of the worldwide recession begin to bite. This ever more insistent beat of opposition to the EU finds powerful echoes in Mike Rapport's lucid analysis of the background to the European upheavals of 1848. Writing before the disaster of the credit crunch, however, he did not always hear these reverberations.

Other historians have maintained that the failure of the liberal constitutionalists and radical republicans to sustain a united front against the absolutist monarchies of Europe in 1848 planted the seed that led to the militaristic unifications of Italy and Germany. In this view, the collapse of liberalism in 1848 meant that the effective opposition to the power of the Austrian empire lay solely in the hands of the Prussian and Piedmontese monarchies. So although two new nations, Germany and Italy, may have germinated in the "Springtime of Peoples" of 1848, their democracies proved to be weak flowers that were easily subverted by the Fascist and Nazi revolutions of the early 20th century.

Rapport, by contrast, believes that the authoritarian regimes of the last century were a hiccup in a much more hopeful process. For him, 1848 represents the first bloom of a truly European consciousness. The revolutionaries, he points out, made very similar demands in every country throughout Europe,

calling for political representation, social justice, and the self-determination of peoples. The Frankfurt parliament even went so far as to advertise itself in three European languages (English, German, and French), which Rapport regards as the first awakening of the European community. Similarly, while the "velvet Revolutionaries" of Eastern Europe in 1986 may have wished to separate themselves from all previous revolutionary traditions, Rapport maintains that they were following on from the bloodless liberal uprisings in the March days of 1848.

He observes two concrete improvements gained through the agency of the failed revolutions of 1848: the end of serfdom throughout Europe and the end of the belief in the divine right of kings. Though the first was a demand of the liberal parliaments in Europe, its concession by the monarchies had the effect of transforming the peasantry into valuable allies against the radicals and the urban proletariat when revolutionary activity turned more violent in the summer and autumn of 1848. As for the divine right of kings, after 1848 all the ruling princes of Europe, save the tsars, understood that they could not rule without some form of popular consent.

Despite being charmed by Rapport's transparent optimism, I suspect that the reader of 2009 will be more intrigued by the gloomier aspects of his book, of which there are plenty because his descriptions are so complete. In his introduction, Rapport expresses his intention of allowing the reader to draw "her or his own conclusions and connections from the evidence," albeit with the aid of "what I hope will be a helpful nudge."

Today, these nudges might feel a bit like a small child tugging at a parent's sleeve to draw his attention to a wonderful ice cream stall, while, unfortunately, the parent's attention is concentrated on some impending catastrophe. At the same time Rapport does remain true to his aim of presenting the facts in a non-judgmental way. This is a very complete book with an enormous bibliography of primary and secondary texts.

Such erudition does not prevent the story from being gripping. Rapport enlivens his account with well-chosen and entertaining quotations from contemporaries such as Tocqueville and Marx. For example, Marx observed that, if ever German revolutionaries were to storm a railway station, they would first buy a platform ticket.

Although the subject is vast, Rapport is a riveting narrator who remains in masterful control. While campaign maps, a glossary, and a *dramatis personae* might have been a help for the uninitiated, the book offers a breathtaking array of concise and witty pen portraits that endow it with the quality of popular history.

In Rome, we see Pius IX dithering between being a republican pope and a reactionary—reaction won. There, too, is Mazzini, who in March 1849 turned the city into a Utopian republic where nobles and workers loved each other, and where even Catholics and Jews practiced religious tolerance. In Venice, the reader discovers the plucky Manin desperately trying to preserve the newly founded republic from Austrian onslaught. Garibaldi, meanwhile, marches all over Italy with his wife and his hundred Argentinians. Poles and Hungarians, Saxons and Frenchmen, Serbs and Prussians also find a place in the cast, all finely depicted.

Then there are the reactionaries: the generals Windischgrätz and Radetzky; Bismarck and Louis Napoleon, the latter half clown, half brilliant political opportunist; and a whole gallery of kings, emperors, and grand dukes of the Austrian Empire. Rapport not only makes space for excellent character portraits, he also covers the social and military history of the urban upheavals and the military campaigns that were fought in Italy and Hungary in 1848 and 1849.

In Rapport's analysis, 1848 is a very hopeful year. He claims that it reignited hopes sown in the French Revolution of universal suffrage, social justice, and women's liberation. The evidence he offers for the last is scant, however: a Neapolitan princess who travels up and

down the coast of Italy looking for anti-Austrian action; a few women clambering onto barricades; and, of course, Garibaldi's wife, who goes everywhere at his side looking every bit the romantic revolutionary.

After the revolutions had been thoroughly mopped up and the revolutionaries sent packing (mainly to England, then as now a refuge for subversives from other countries), Alexander Herzen, the Russian radical, produced an essay addressed to his son called "From The Other Shore," in which he wrote:

Modern man only builds a bridge. It will be for the unknown man of the future to pass over it. You may be there to see him but do not I beg remain on this shore. ... Better to perish with the revolution than seek refuge in the almshouse of reaction.

One senses that Rapport is right behind Herzen, cheering him on, confident that he is right. The world is a better place than it was. We are richer, we are more democratic, we have fairer legal systems that guarantee citizens'

rights. The countries of Eastern Europe have finally achieved their revolutions and become independent members of the European movement.

But the reader of 2009 might not agree. He will look apprehensively at the precipice, which we now seem to be approaching, and compare the circumstances described by Rapport with those pertaining today. Was not the settlement at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, like the reconstruction and division of Europe after the Second World War, an attempt to freeze Europe against any future disruption? Metternich tried to hold back the tide of French republicanism with a ring of absolutist monarchies bound together by the Austrian Empire. Though the EU may be seen as the final flowering of a European consciousness, it can equally be regarded as an attempt to contain and control the terrible power of middle European nationalism. Nationalism remains as much a threat to the European Community as it was to the Austrian Empire.

In the years after the Napoleonic wars, there were massive changes in the economic structure of Europe. The spread of new technology had enabled mass production to supplant the artisan workshops of the past. A whole new proletarian class had been created from peasants attracted to the towns by greater job opportunities, while another class, that of skilled workers, was put under threat. In the 1840s, throughout Europe, the population was growing and food was becoming scarcer. Crop failures of potatoes and wheat reduced large sections of the population to starvation levels, and a revolutionary situation was born.

At the start of the 21st century, we, too, have witnessed a massive change in the economic structure of the world. Rapid communication via the internet and mobile-phone technology has had a threefold effect on the way that the world works. Firstly, skills and technical knowledge can now be relocated swiftly from one place to another, allowing industrial production to move from country to country with the greatest of ease. Sec-

ondly, the availability of knowledge has greatly increased both the movement of peoples and the friction between them. Lastly, technology and globalization have encouraged what was already the virtual world of banking to become lost in a fantasy of limitless wealth.

Just as Metternich's postbellum attempt to create a world in stasis was undermined by giant economic shifts, so now the stable world that was created after the Second World War has begun to dissolve. The pace of change seems to have outstripped society's ability to harness change. A few years of recession engendered by the financial chaos that we find ourselves in may well lead to a revolutionary situation, as occurred in Europe in 1848. This time, however, it will not be libertarian democrats protesting against absolutists but authoritarian and nationalist movements expressing disillusion with democracy and civil rights.

This book is full of quirky and interesting incidents. But the tone is set by the cruel waste of human life in the wake of these revolutions by both sides. In the autumn of 1848, there sprang up a terrible fashion for lynching moderate conservative politicians. It spread from Budapest in September 1848, when Ferenc Lamberg was battered to death by a crowd, to Vienna in October and the sadistic destruction of Latour, and thence, in November, to the fatal stabbing of poor Count Rossi in the entrance to the Roman Chamber of Deputies.

Equally, the crowds mown down by grapeshot in street fighting and the mass executions of the officer corps of the rebel armies make one feel that the most positive thing about the 1848 revolutions was that they only lasted for a year and a half. If today's democratic rulers have a chance to read this book, they might try to glean some information about how the absolutists of 1848 managed to survive the storm. ■

Septimus Waugh is a carpenter and woodcarver living in Devon, England. His website is www.septimuswaugh.co.uk.

MOVING?

Changing your address?

Simply go to **The American Conservative** website, www.amconmag.com

Click "subscribe" and then click "address change."

To access your account make sure you have your TAC mailing label. You may also subscribe or renew online.

If you prefer to mail your address change send your TAC label with your new address to:

The American Conservative
Subscription Department
P.O. Box 9030
Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

[*Descent Into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, Ahmed Rashid, Penguin, 484 pages]

Fault Lines

By Mary Wakefield

LIKE MANY CONSERVATIVES at odds with the neocons, I had been harboring a hope that if we tiptoed quietly away from civil wars and stopped sponsoring psychopaths and threatening world leaders on 24-hour news, everyone would calm down and learn to play nice. That was before I read *Descent Into Chaos*, Ahmed Rashid's brave, painstaking analysis of the war on terror. Though Rashid shows that al-Qaeda and the Taliban are at least partly monsters of our own creation, he also makes clear that they won't creep away on their own.

Since Rashid sent his manuscript to press, President Obama has taken some of his advice about a new American image: Gitmo is slated to close and there's talk of talk with Iran. Even so, Afghanistan and nuclear Pakistan descend further into chaos every day. This new paperback edition, complete with a revised chapter addressed to the new U.S. administration, is timely indeed.

A few weeks ago in Afghanistan, for instance, a compromised Hamid Karzai was finagled into passing the Shia Family Law, which says that a wife can't leave home without her husband's permission or forbid him sex without a doctor's note. Many Afghan women have—despite the risk to their lives—been out protesting, claiming this amounts to legalizing rape, which of course it does. But the fact that the liberal Karzai felt forced to pass the law—to keep Shia clerics onside in the run-up to the election—shows how fractured Afghanistan has become and what a near impossible task it is for Karzai to hold together all the warring groups.

In Pakistan, the situation is graver still, and all the more so for being less publicized. Four years ago, Islamabad was considered one of the safest places

in the country. Now the city's streets are sealed off, and armed guards stroll the sidewalks. Islamabad's 5-star hotels are all prepared for what they think is an inevitable Mumbai-style attack. The Taliban Commander Mullah Nazir Ahmed said recently, "the day is not far when Islamabad will be in the hands of the Mujahideen." He may have a point.

After eight years and billions of dollars, after the best efforts of the most powerful nation on earth, Osama is still hiding out—perhaps in the Chitral district of Pakistan. Mullah Omar and the original Taliban Shura are still hanging loose in Balochistan province. Al-Qaeda has a safe haven in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan.

Where did it all go wrong? What can America and her freedom-loving friends do now? Rashid offers no clear answers, apart from perhaps to read this book and try desperately not to make too many of the same clunking mistakes again.

The first and most obvious lesson *Descent Into Chaos* has to offer the new administration is easy: however hard they beg, however convincing they sound, never, ever listen to anything Donald Rumsfeld or Dick Cheney has to say. The second (related) lesson is harder: try to avoid being both arrogant and lazy at the same time. "We're an empire now, and when we act we create our own reality," a Bush adviser told Ron Suskind, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist shortly after 9/11. That may be right, but why not give a thought to what sort of a reality that might be?

If Rashid's right—and I'm sure he is—the truth is that while Bush *et al.* were gung-ho for almost any war, the cleaning up after was too much of a chore. "When the first G8 meeting on security-sector reform in Afghanistan was held in 2002, the U.S. delegation was instructed by Washington to say that it would not get involved in nation-building or peace-keeping ... and it wanted nothing to do with rebuilding Afghanistan's police or justice system," writes Rashid. "The European and Afghan leaders could not believe what they were hearing. Here was a superpower that had just con-

quered another country refusing to take responsibility for it."

Little did the G8 know that Rumsfeld and Cheney were already dreaming of Iraq; that on the very day of the World Trade Center attack, Rummy had written to an aide asking him to search for evidence of Iraqi involvement: "Go massive—sweep it all up, things related and not." Rashid opens his book with this quote.

How could the clever men and women leading the land of the free be so daft? It's an endlessly puzzling question. If the Bush gang was going to play empires, why didn't they look to the examples of the world's best empire builders, the British, say, or Alexander the Great? Either would have told them that some knowledge of the nation you are invading is handy for an aspiring imperialist. They might also have told Bush that it's helpful to think about what hidden agendas your so-called friends might have. Throughout their war in Afghanistan, Bush and Rumsfeld relied on the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI) without ever bothering to imagine what their motives might have been. Alexander would surely have suspected that the ISI's and al-Qaeda's shared interest in training Islamist terrorists was a concern. One of Rashid's central contentions is that if Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia—what he calls "the region"—are riddled with extremism now, it's at least partly because of the Bush administration's willful blindness to the ISI's double game: aiding the Taliban and al-Qaeda as it promised America it was routing them.

It's also, of course, because of Bush's spectacular lack of intelligence. CIA director George Tenet insisted—and still insists—that America was well prepared for 9/11. But as Rashid points out, "apart from a handful of CIA officers, no U.S. officials had been inside Afghanistan for a decade." How could they be well prepared when no CIA officers spoke Persian, Dari, or Pushtu? "I was flooded with email appeals from American companies hired by the U.S. government trying to find U.S. citizens who could speak Farsi, Pushtu, Dari, Turkmen, Urdu or Uzbek,"

writes Rashid.

Though Bill Clinton failed to develop a coherent strategy for dealing with the Taliban pre-9/11, at least he took them seriously. When Bush visited the White House on Dec. 16, 2000, he was warned by the outgoing administration not to underestimate al-Qaeda's influence in Pakistan. Team Bush responded to this helpful warning with indifference. "I don't want to see Pakistan only through the lens or the prism of Osama bin Laden," said Richard Armitage, the new deputy secretary of state.

Going through Rashid's account, it's almost impressive to see how often Bush or his advisers repeat the same errors. Though insufficient intelligence had proved a great weakness in 2001, Rashid reports that between 2002 and 2005, the United States didn't even bother to monitor Taliban activity in four provinces in the south or across the border from Quetta. It's as if the White House deliberately turned a blind eye to inconvenient facts. America creates its own reality—and its own unreality, too.

By contrast, the Taliban's ability to adapt quicker than the U.S., or indeed NATO, would be almost admirable if it were not so alarming. Rashid describes the Taliban regime pre-9/11 as having "no concern for the public nor any sense of responsibility toward them." This month, however, the *New York Times* reports dramatic leaps in Taliban political strategy: they now offer land reform and basic health and education to peasants in Pakistan's Swat valley. They are making like Maoists, engineering class revolt. They've evolved: Taliban 2.0.

Rashid is right, then. There's not much cheery news about the situation in Afghanistan or Pakistan, but for anyone in a philosophical mood, there's some metaphysical solace to be found running through *Descent Into Chaos*. Hypocrisy really doesn't pay. The blithe neocon disregard for human lives, often masked as concern for human rights, has backfired.

Throughout the book, whenever Rumsfeld and Bush make common cause with thugs and militants as they mouth pieties about democracy and

freedom, they come a cropper. Washington sponsored cruel, repressive warlords like the notorious Ismael Khan because it was simpler and cheaper than channeling money through the new Afghan government. But that policy—of empowering the same gun-toting robbers who destabilized the country pre-Taliban—is exactly what sowed the seeds of the Taliban's current resurgence.

It's not just America whose mixed motives and self-serving policies have deepened the crisis in Afghanistan and Pakistan. One of the major problems with all international aid to Afghanistan seems to be the worrying fact that, faced with a choice between painstakingly training up some official in the education ministry or simply cutting him out and building your own school, an aid donor invariably plumps for the second, sexier option. And a lack of communication means that there's an undignified scramble to sponsor the same high-profile projects. "USAID, DFID (Britain's Department for International Development) the European Union, and the World Bank all hired separate contractors to modernize the collection of customs revenues on the Afghan border," says Rashid. The excellent Ashraf Ghani, Afghanistan's former finance minister and author (with Clare Lockhart) of *Fixing Failed States*, complains to Rashid, "my best people were stolen by international aid organizations who could offer them forty to a hundred times the salary I could."

By the book's last despairing chapters, a final irony of the whole bungled affair becomes clear. In some ways, America really has succeeded in spreading its values throughout the Stans and Central Asia. When, for instance, the CIA began to use the ISI to torture prisoners in Pakistan, it became impossible to object to President Musharraf butchering and maiming his opponents.

So perhaps the U.S. can still lead by example. Will the new administration use America's lingering influence to undo the damage in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia? Perhaps it's too late. As I write, though, they're celebrating Easter in Jerusalem, Egypt, Iraq, and even in

parts of "the region." Here is a paschal lesson for America from Ahmed Rashid's book: it pays to practice what you preach. ■

Mary Wakefield is deputy editor of *The Spectator*.

[*The Philosophers' Quarrel: Rousseau, Hume, and the Limits of Human Understanding*, Robert Zaretsky and John T. Scott, Yale University Press, 247 pages]

The End of Enlightenment

By Donald Livingston

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT the break-up of the short friendship between David Hume and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the response to it by the "republic of letters" in Europe at the time, and what it intimates for us today.

The story is this: Rousseau's friends, fearful for his safety in France, asked Hume to find him safe refuge in England. Hume had no prior acquaintance with Rousseau, but he was able to arrange a house with servants in the North of England and a pension from George III. The friend who supplied the house also paid for a private carriage to take the penniless Rousseau on the long trip from London to the North. Knowing about Rousseau's fierce independence, Hume's friend told a white lie: he said that because of chance circumstances there was a carriage Rousseau could have at a nominal fee. Rousseau discovered the ruse before leaving London and berated an astonished Hume for about an hour. He then suddenly ran to Hume, embraced him, sat on his lap, hugged him to his cheek, and asked forgiveness for what he had said. Both men were brought to tears.

Yet Rousseau continued to brood over the matter and recalled an earlier incident at an inn when Hume had mut-

tered in his sleep: "*Je tiens Jean-Jacques.*" Later, Rousseau was satirized by Horace Walpole, an acquaintance of Hume's. Rousseau concluded that Hume was involved in a plot to persecute him, wrote a long and careful letter accusing him of malicious intent, and broke off relations. Some of Rousseau's closest friends vouched for Hume but to no effect. Astonished and hurt, Hume concluded that Rousseau was mean-spirited and probably mad. Since he feared that his character would be blackened in the autobiography that Rousseau was writing, he published their correspondence. This unleashed an intense Europe-wide quarrel between the partisans of Hume and Rousseau.

The authors of this book call the affair "An Enlightenment Quarrel" and "An Enlightenment Tragedy." Their stated goal is "to tell the story of the brief and dramatic friendship between Hume and Rousseau, and point to the implications it may have for the Enlightenment's conception of human reason and understanding." The strength of the book is that the story told is a pleasure to read. Zaretsky and Scott open a window into the 18th-century republic of letters. The rich array of the characters who entered the lives of Hume and Rousseau are woven into the plot: Diderot, D'Alembert, Voltaire, Comtesse de Bouffler, Julie de Lespinasse, Turgot, Condorcet, Boswell, Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, Horace Walpole, Lord Kames, Francis Hutcheson, Erasmus Darwin, Frederick II, Louis XV, Prince de Conti, David Garrick, and many others. And the story is a page-turner, graced with colorful episodes, disregard of temporal order, flashbacks, and dramatic reversals.

The weakness of the book, however, is that it provides only the vaguest account of how this quarrel reveals limits to "the Enlightenment's conception of human reason and understanding." There is no explanation of what is meant by Enlightenment. Weighty and philosophically contested terms such as "reason," "nature," and "feeling" are used without definition. And when philosophical claims are made about

these contested notions, they are presented intermittently, almost as side comments. Nor is it always clear how the remarks about reason and its limits cohere with what has been said elsewhere, perhaps a hazard of having two authors. There is no attempt to offer an evaluation of either philosopher's conception of understanding nor any attempt to determine who had the better side of the quarrel.

Though we are informed at the beginning that the "relevance [of their critiques of reason] for our own age is clear: religious fanatics and philosophical reactionaries hounded Hume and Rousseau throughout their lives," we are never told who those counterparts are today or by whom they are being hounded. The quarrel between Hume and Rousseau is said to "pose the question of the relationship between ideas and life, thinking and living." The authors lament the fact that philosophy today is something done by academic bureaucrats and not, as it was for the ancients, "an art of living, a method for aligning our lives with our thoughts." They rightly say that this was not true of the Enlightenment, an age in which the public began again to look to philosophers as guides. Hume and Rousseau were walking (if conflicting) icons of the Enlightenment. Their "lives, and not merely their thought," held a fascination for their contemporaries and still do for us today. It is the "unintended lessons of their work and lives," more than of their theorizing, from which the authors think we have something to learn. Sadly, those lessons are not clearly explained; the reader is left to tease them out.

One explanation of the quarrel is that Hume and Rousseau worked with incommensurable notions of truth and understanding. For Hume, truth was gained through critically correcting judgments in common life by publicly ascertainable standards. For Rousseau, "truth was no longer located outside ourselves, but instead was within our self." Truth is "loyalty to one's self." The philosopher's task is to "cultivate the sentiments of existence." The tragedy

of the quarrel, say the authors, was that "Hume was incapable of seeing that Rousseau represented an alternative way of knowing that went, in a certain sense, beyond reason to regions reached only through the imagination and the passions." Even if there were such knowing and such regions, the question of whether Hume was guilty of a conspiracy to persecute Rousseau does not concern them. That is a question of fact to be determined, as Hume rightly understood, by the ordinary canons of evidence.

Hume worked out the first systematic critique of modern ideologies, an achievement that has not been surpassed by later critics such as Burke, Oakeshott, and Voegelin. It is surprising that the authors make nothing of it. Nor do they avail themselves of the considerable philosophical literature on Hume and Rousseau's respective critiques of reason.

In his first book, Hume said, "Generally speaking the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous." But this was only a contingent matter, for the ancient "Cynics ... from reasonings purely philosophical ran into as great extravagancies of conduct as any Monk or Dervise that was ever in the world." He observed that philosophy was more fanatical in the ancient world than religion. Philosophy becomes pathological when cut off from the pre-reflective inheritance of common life. Hume argued that a serious attempt to emancipate oneself from the pre-reflective ends in total skepticism. True philosophers understand this, and seek only to methodize and correct judgments within the framework of common life. The false philosopher is self-deceived, because he denies the authority of the pre-reflective and at the same time is unknowingly guided by it. The lives of the false philosophers, Hume says, are lived in a "vacuum." They "are in a different element from the rest of mankind" and "no one can answer for what will please or displease them." Such were Diogenes and Rousseau.

The Enlightenment was an attempt to

supplant religion with philosophy. Philosophers began to be seen as public figures, both as scandals and as objects of emulation. In this new public space, Rousseau cut a figure. He led an "artificial life" in the "vacuum" of false philosophy. Rousseau was the first philosopher to become a public personality, inspiring contempt, horror, and adoration. Hume observed that Rousseau was more a subject of gossip than kings and aristocrats. People eagerly sought to know everything about him: his mistress, his dress, his manners, and his dog. Even Hume momentarily lost his balance: as Rousseau's protector, he basked in his glory and notoriety. He enjoyed showing him around and gushed that he could live with him in intimacy forever.

Yet what initially bound Hume to Rousseau—and to many of his Enlightenment friends in France—was not agreement about substantive philosophical and moral matters so much as a ritualistic anti-clericalism. The Enlightenment was in its youth. Its positive content had yet to be explored and held up to critical review. Hume's profound distinction between true and false philosophy had not entered the minds of the *philosophes* who were plunging headlong into the project of replacing religion with philosophy.

Hume was not sanguine about this: for him, everything depended on whether the dominant philosophy would be the true or the false. A culture dominated by false philosophy could be worse than one dominated by religion. As Hume's career developed, his youthful claim—that the errors of religion were dangerous; those of philosophy merely ridiculous—began to change. The Rousseau affair shocked him into recognizing an emerging mass philosophical consciousness, more inclined to false philosophy than the true. Rousseau's "artificial life" with its world-inverting teachings could be dangerous if taken seriously and acted out by that mass audience. The tendency of Rousseau's writings, Hume said, "is surely rather to do hurt than Service to Mankind."

It was at this time that Hume's other "Enlightenment" friendships began to unravel: with Holbach, D'Alembert, and Turgot. But it was in the emergence of mass political parties, shaped by a corrupt philosophical consciousness—what we know as political ideologies—that he saw the greatest danger. These, he said, "are known only to modern times, and are, perhaps, the most extraordinary phenomenon, that has yet appeared in human affairs." World-inverting "artificial lives" are harmless in an eccentric, but disastrous when attempted by an entire society and enforced by the state.

We have had two centuries to explore what the Enlightenment had to offer. Its enemy, the Church, had a lot to answer for. We must keep in mind, however, that more people were executed in two years of the French Revolution by the Enlightenment's inquisition than in two centuries of the Holy Inquisition. And to this must be added the massive centralization of state power, the hollowing out of traditional societies, global wars, and mass murders carried out in the name of Enlightenment conceptions of liberty and equality.

Zaretsky and Scott lament how philosophy has fallen from its role as the guide of life. They confess to being "shocked" that philosophers can aid totalitarian regimes. Their story would have been enriched by exploring Hume's distinction between a true and a corrupt philosophical consciousness and how that distinction bears on a criticism of the Enlightenment. But one cannot do everything. This is a book about philosophers, but it is not a philosophical work; it is a story about the lives of two philosophers and is designed to "point to the implications" for further criticism. Like a good signpost, it points in the right direction, but is not required to go there. ■

Donald Livingston is professor of philosophy at Emory University, author of Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium: Hume's Pathology of Philosophy, and president of the Abbeville Institute.

Isabel Paterson

Continued from page 27

reached after long consideration of other ways of explaining the world. Paterson believed that the energy of the world required a source. She also believed, as she says in *The God of the Machine*, that no one could "rewrite the Declaration of Independence without reference to a divine source of human rights. It cannot be done; the axiom is missing." A world without God would be a world without an intellectual and moral framework, and thus without a grounding for liberty. These were ideas that Rand, a dogmatic atheist, could never fully grasp.

As her own fame supplanted Paterson's, Rand allowed the older woman's influence on her to fall gradually into the shadows. Yet for many years she insisted that people who were interested in her own work must also read Paterson's. Nor did she ever completely disavow her link to the "one encounter" that had decisively influenced her career.

Russell Kirk, the philosopher of American conservatism, had his own quarrelsome relationship with Paterson. Yet, he said, she "stood out courageously, in defiance of the Lonely Crowd. I thought that everyone must be reading her ... and could never forget her."

Probably no one who encountered Isabel Paterson easily forgot her. Now a new generation needs an introduction. In this moment when, under stress, basic ideas are being recovered, *Atlas* is surging in popularity, and the historic failures of the New Deal are being re-examined, it is time to revisit her wit and learning. "The principle of the lever remains the same." ■

Stephen Cox is professor of literature at UC San Diego. His two latest books are The New Testament and Literature and The Woman and the Dynamo, a biography of Isabel Paterson.

Song of the South

You probably don't know about BB guns in Athens, Alabama in 1957. Or bustin' sugar rocks in a sunny field of goober peas in the dead silence of an Alabama

summer. Or shooting cottonmouths off the old iron footbridge in the swamps next to the Valley Gin, which in the Cotton Kingdom didn't mean vodka made unpalatable by the addition of juniper juice.

Well, it's time you knew. You need to know this stuff to be a real American. It ain't treaties and battles that makes an American. No. It's knowing the coppery flight of a BB out of a Daisy Eagle and running barefoot and wild in the Old South when a kid of 11 was still just a kid of 11.

Ask any Southerner. He'll tell you.

Athens was the county seat of Limestone County, and goober peas are what people who don't know any better call "peanuts." Mostly Yankees. They didn't know anything. We all knew that.

A sugar rock was a geode, and Athens was littered with them. So me and Tommy Thompson used to go out in the goober field and find them sugar rocks and bust 'em on the road to see the crystals inside. It was quiet in Athens then, real quiet, and hot. That's how Alabama is. Was, anyways.

In those days, I spoke Southern. The first year I was in Athens, the other kids called me "that Danyank on the corner." I wasn't sure how a Virginia kid was a damn Yankee. Didn't Marse Bob have some little part running the Army of Northern Virginia? All my people were on the right side of that war. But the memory of Sherman lay heavy on these kids who probably had never heard of Sherman.

After a while I learned that words needed a padding of spare syllables to be comfortable and relaxed, and today I hate to see words all short and uncomfortable and stunted.

I remember my mother's horror when she asked Willy Bill Farinner, also 11, if he wanted to lunch with us. "No thank ye, Ma'am, ah has done et already." Well, I don't guess Willy Bill was exactly Milton, but then I don't guess Milton was exactly Willy Bill. Call it a draw.

Anyway, this iron footbridge went over a little creek in the marshes next to the gin. It was rusted, and the creek was full of minners glittering and shining when something chased them. Skeeter

AFTER A WHILE I LEARNED THAT **WORDS NEEDED A PADDING OF SPARE SYLLABLES TO BE COMFORTABLE.**

hawks flitted everywhere, iridescent green and red and looking dangerous. They're sometimes called "devil's darn-ing needles" or "snake doctors," but only people of no 'count call them "dragon flies."

So I'd go there alone with my BB gun and lean over the rail and wait. Sooner or later, a cottonmouth, just a little one, would park itself against a rock as a breakwater, and I'd draw a bead, and that would be that. One summer I got 13. We kids could shoot, I'll say that. It was the high point of my life. I peaked early, and it's been downhill since. It was so quiet, and kinda pretty with the bugs and minners and clear water, and not lonely.

You don't need people around all the time. I didn't, leastways.

There was, of course, war. The South has a knack for it. We didn't do duels, not formal ones anyway. If provoked, though, I was capable of yelling, "I'm gonna knock you upside the head, you no-count scandal, knock the far outta you." In what Yankees regard as English, "scandal" means "scoundrel," "far" is what burns things. "No-count" means "of no account." But we regarded the North as a minor current of the language.

Me and this other fool, Jimmy-Jack 'Callister—this was Scots-Irish country, though I didn't know it, and most of us had those chiseled Elvis features—Jimmy-Jack and me used to go to the little ramshackle country store near my house on Pryor Street and steal 12-gauge shotgun shells. I'm not proud of it. I did

it, though. I'd stick one in a roll of toilet paper and buy the roll. I wonder what the people in the store thought was wrong with my family.

We'd cut them off just in front of the wadding and use the birdshot to make match-head spoke-guns. I won't tell you how because someone would do it, blind somebody, and sue me. Back then, we sort of figured if you did something stupid, well, you did it, and had to live with what happened.

And then we'd put the powder and primer part on the end of a BB gun and shoot it off at night, and get a spout of far that went three feet in the air.

It was another country. ■

Choose Life Grow Young with HGH

From the landmark book *Grow Young with HGH* comes the most powerful, over-the-counter health supplement in the history of man. Human growth hormone was first discovered in 1920 and has long been thought by the medical community to be necessary only to stimulate the body to full adult size and therefore unnecessary past the age of 20. Recent studies, however, have overturned this notion completely, discovering instead that the natural decline of Human Growth Hormone (HGH), from ages 21 to 61 (the average age at which there is only a trace left in the body) and is the main reason why the the body ages and fails to regenerate itself to its 25 year-old biological age.

Like a picked flower cut from the source, we gradually wilt physically and mentally and become vulnerable to a host of degenerative diseases, that we simply weren't susceptible to in our early adult years.

Modern medical science now regards aging as a disease that is treatable and preventable and that "aging", the disease, is actually a compilation of various diseases and pathologies, from everything, like a rise in blood glucose and pressure to diabetes, skin wrinkling and so on. All of these aging symptoms can be stopped and rolled back by maintaining Growth Hormone levels in

the blood at the same levels HGH existed in the blood when we were 25 years old.

There is a receptor site in almost every cell in the human body for HGH, so its regenerative and healing effects are very comprehensive.

Growth Hormone first synthesized in 1985 under the Reagan Orphan drug act, to treat dwarfism, was quickly recognized to stop aging in its tracks and reverse it to a remarkable degree. Since then, only the lucky and the rich have had access to it at the cost of \$10,000 US per year.

The next big breakthrough was to come in 1997 when a group of doctors and scientists, developed an all-natural source product which would cause your own natural HGH to be released again and do all the remarkable things it did for you in your 20's. Now available to every adult for about the price of a coffee and donut a day.



GHR now available in America, just in time for the aging Baby Boomers and everyone else from age 30 to 90 who doesn't want to age rapidly but would rather stay young, beautiful and healthy all of the time.

The new HGH releasers are winning converts from the synthetic HGH users as well, since GHR is just as effective, is oral instead of self-injectable and is very affordable.

GHR is a natural releaser, has no known side effects, unlike the synthetic version and has no known drug interactions. Progressive doctors admit that this is the direction medicine is seeking to go, to get the body to heal itself instead of employing drugs. GHR is truly a revolutionary paradigm shift in medicine and, like any modern leap frog advance, many others will be left in the dust holding their limited, or useless drugs and remedies.

It is now thought that HGH is so comprehensive in its healing and regenerative powers that it is today, where the computer industry was twenty years ago, that it will displace so many prescription and non-prescription drugs and health remedies that it is staggering to think of.

The president of BIE Health Products stated in a recent interview, I've been waiting for these products since the 70's. We knew they would come, if only we could stay healthy and live long enough to see them! If you want to stay on top of your game, physically and mentally as you age, this product is a boon, especially for the highly skilled professionals who have made large investments in their education, and experience. Also with the failure of Congress to honor our seniors with pharmaceutical coverage policy, it's more important than ever to take pro-active steps to safeguard your health. Continued use of GHR will make a radical difference in your health, HGH is particularly helpful to the elderly who, given a choice, would rather stay independent in their own home, strong, healthy and alert enough to manage their own affairs, exercise and stay involved in their communities. Frank, age 85, walks two miles a day, plays golf, belongs to a dance club for seniors, had a girl friend again and doesn't need Viagra, passed his drivers test and is hardly ever home when we call - GHR delivers.

HGH is known to relieve symptoms of Asthma, Angina, Chronic Fatigue, Constipation, Lower back pain and Sciatica, Cataracts and Macular Degeneration, Menopause, Fibromyalgia, Regular and Diabetic Neuropathy, Hepatitis, helps Kidney Dialysis and Heart and Stroke recovery.

For more information or to order call 877-849-4777
www.biehealth.us
©copyright 2000

New! Doctor
Recommended

The Reverse Aging Miracle

RELEASE YOUR OWN GROWTH HORMONE AND ENJOY:

- Improved sleep & emotional stability
- Increased energy & exercise endurance
- Loss of body fat
- Increased bone density
- Improved memory & mental alertness
- Increased muscle strength & size
- Reverse baldness & color restored
- **Regenerates Immune System**
- Strengthened heart muscle
- Controlled cholesterol
- **Normalizes blood pressure**
- Controlled mood swings
- Wrinkle disappearance
- Reverse many degenerative disease symptoms
- Heightened five senses awareness
- Increased skin thickness & texture

All Natural
Formula

This program will make a radical difference in your health, appearance and outlook. In fact we are so confident of the difference GHR can make in your life we offer a 100% refund on unopened containers.

1-877-849-4777

www.biehealth.us

A Product of
Global Health
Products



BIE Health Products
3840 East Robinson Road
Box 139
Amherst, NY 14228



DIV 2037839 ON

These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED